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Hegemonic Masculinity and Gender Performativity in John Fante's *Ask the Dust*, Charles Bukowski's *Women*, and Mordecai Richler's *Barney's Version*

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Resumé

Le concept d'hégémonie masculine est décrit par R.W. Connell (1995) comme étant un concept qui légitime la position de dominance sociale de certains hommes, tout en justifiant la subordination des femmes, et de la plupart des hommes. Ce faisant, alors qu'une petite partie d'homme exerce un contrôle social évident, la plupart des hommes se retrouvent incapable d'atteindre les standards établis par la minorité dominante. Richesse, prouesses physique, confiance en soi, talent spécifique, et agir avec confiance en présence de femmes, ces éléments font tous parti de l'ethos de l'hégémonie masculine. Ce faisant, alors que la plupart tentent d'atteindre le statut hégémonique, ils pourraient alors se sentir obligé d'agir d'une façon définie, ce que Judith Butler appelle la performance de genre (1990). Il existe aussi une forme de masculinité que l'on appelle orthodoxe (Anderson, 2005), qui est une forme de masculinité préconisant l'homophobie, le sacrifice de soi, la misogynie, et les comportements jugés «masculin» tels que la consommation d'alcool et de tabac. Ce projet étudie trois romans, Ask the Dust (1939) de John Fante, Women (1977) de Charles Bukowski, et Barney's Version (1997) de Mordecai Richler. Bien qu'Anderson et Connell ont tous les deux mis en lumière l'existence de multiples masculinités et qu'elles sont de plus en plus acceptée dans différents cercles sociaux, les trois romans à l'étude dans le cas présent ont été écrit au vingtième siècle, une époque ou la masculinité orthodoxe était souvent lié à l'hégémonie. En utilisant les arguments de Connell, Butler, et Anderson comme point de départ afin de comprendre l'interprétation que font les personnages principaux de leur propre masculinité, ce projet tend à démontrer que le concept d'hégémonie masculine a un impact direct sur eux, leur opinion d'eux même, et les choix qu'ils font. Cet argument sera prouvé à l'aide de trois éléments de leur vie qu'ils ont en commun, soit

leurs relations avec les femmes, leur obsession vis-à-vis l'écriture, ainsi que les prétendus «vices» auxquels ils succombent.

Abstract

Hegemonic masculinity was described by R. W. Connell (1995), as a concept that legitimizes the dominant position of men in society, while justifying the subordination of most men and women. As a result, as the dominant men are in control, most men are unable to reach the standards that they established, as they are not available to most. Wealth, physical prowess, self-confidence, specific talents, and confidence with women, are all part of the hegemonic masculinity ethos. However, as most try to attain hegemonic status, they might feel forced to act a certain way in order to fit within the expectations of the hegemony, which Judith Butler refers to as gender performance (1990). There also exists a form of orthodox masculinity (Anderson, 2005) which is a form of masculinity that encouraged homophobia, self-sacrifice, misogyny, and manly behaviours such as drinking and smoking. This project studies three novels, Ask the Dust (1939) By John Fante, *Women* (1977) by Charles Bukowski, and *Barney's Version* (1997) by Mordecai Richler. If Anderson and Connell have both pointed out that there are multiple masculinities that exist and that they are more and more accepted within the different social circles, the three novels in question were written in the 20th century, a time where orthodox masculinity was often seen as the hegemonic form. Using Connell, Butler, and Anderson's arguments as a starting point to understand the protagonists' interpretation of their own masculinity, this thesis argues that hegemonic masculinity has a direct impact on them, their opinion of themselves, and the choices they make. This will be proved with three components of their lives that they have in common: their relationship with women, their obsession with writing, and their "so-called vices".

Introduction

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as first defined by R.W. Connell in *Masculinities* (1995), stipulates that it is the "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77). In the three novels selected for this research, *Ask the Dust* by John Fante (1939), *Women* by Charles Bukowski (1977), and *Barney's Version* (1997) by Mordecai Richler, the question of hegemonic masculinity and what being a man means, so central to each narrative and to the main protagonists' sense of self, will be analyzed through a gender studies and more specifically, masculinity studies approach. Whether aware of it or not, these characters fall in line with or attempt to live up to hegemonic masculinity. In this thesis, I argue that the protagonists in these novels define their identities as men, and in fact perform their masculinities, through their relationships to women, through their writing, and through their struggles with different vices. Hence, the social and personal construction of masculinity will be the focal point throughout this study by addressing the following questions: What does it mean to be a man? What are the expectations laid upon the characters in their respective social contexts? How do the discourses and expectations around masculinity affect the ways in which these characters see themselves and the world around them?

Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there is a "hierarchy of masculinities," and the social privileges of hegemonic masculinity is only accorded to certain men, allowing them to attain position of power, while relegating other "lesser" men, to subordinate positions: "the hegemonic model, so to speak, may only correspond to the actual

characters of a small number of men" ("Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity" 592). In other words, even if the majority of men strive for a masculine ideal defined by such things as physical strength, attractiveness, money, power, and confidence, few actually achieve those things and consequently, are unable to attain the status, privilege, and power that come with them. Therefore, the ideal of hegemonic kind of masculinity is unattainable to most men, and consequently leaving those who cannot attain it insecure about their own masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity allows for a better understanding of the protagonists' actions and the way they view and treat women as well as themselves. Are women the cause of the protagonists' troubles, or do these emerge from the social pressure caused by hegemonic masculinity that raises expectations that cannot be met by the characters? In *Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity*, (1990) Judith Butler points out that gender is the repeated performance of gender "acts" and stylization of the body that, over time, comes to be seen as "natural." Butler elaborates on the socially constructed and performative aspects of gender, and argues that there is a distinction to be made between sex and gender, and that gender is performed according to social norms that are repeated, internalized and ultimately essentialized. She states that "the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed. Hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (8). By trying to fit within the socially defined norms of hegemonic masculinity, these males act in ways they think others expect them to act in order to fit in the hegemonic social norms attached to masculinity. They perform that ideal by engaging in "typical" masculine behaviours such as giving in to vices (drinking, smoking, gambling), womanizing (interacting with women in a way that they think they are expected to), and using their writing as

a way to give themselves self-importance and therefore, confidence. Eric Anderson has argued that orthodox masculinity values ideals of strong, heterosexual, hyper-masculine men, while in *Inclusive Masculinity: the Changing Nature of Masculinities* (2011), he argues that the landscape of masculinity has changed, and that there is now more than one model of masculinity. This thesis will attempt to examine how the main protagonists in the chosen corpus express, deal with, affirm, or modify these various forms of masculine gendered performances.

Three novels chosen for this project are *Ask the Dust* by John Fante (1939), *Women* by Charles Bukowski (1977), and *Barney's Version* by Mordecai Richler (1997). The main characters and narrators of the novels are Henri Chinaski (*Women*), Arturo Bandini (*Ask the Dust*), and Barney Panofsky (*Barney's Version*). Two of the authors chosen (Bukowski and Fante) are American, while Richler is from Québec. All three novels represent a certain type of failed masculinity, expressed through the main protagonists' difficulties with certain vices, in their troubled relationships to women who serve as both artistic muses and source of emotional distress and self-reflection, and through the act of writing itself and the "persona" of the writer, which they see as being bound up with masculinist performances of gender identity. Furthermore, the three novels are from three different time periods, allowing for a comparison of the social norms and discourses around masculinity in each, and how they changed historically.

Charles Bukowski's third novel, Women represent an accomplishment in his career and is considered to be among his greatest work. While his previous two novels established his signature prose with the principal subject being work and alienation, Women sees his alter ego, Henry Chinaski, fully embrace his identity as a writer. The plot shifts from a struggling working man railing against the world, to a marginally successful writer who is able to survive off of his chosen

profession. While Bukowski's work had always veered towards the subject of women prior to the release of the novel of the same name, it had never been at the centre of his narratives, as is the case here. The full dynamic of his relationships is willingly exposed here and allows for a better understanding of how they influenced both his sense of his own masculinity and his writing.

Fante's seminal novel, *Ask the Dust*, sees Arturo Bandini struggling as a writer in 1930's Los Angeles, while fighting for the love of a woman, in what seems to be more of a personal challenge rather than a real desire to fall in love. He is completely obsessed with the thought of becoming a famous writer, and along with that comes his obsession with Camilla, which seems to be more about his desire to convince her to recognize how great he is than winning her heart. Their courtship starts out in dramatic fashion, as Bandini is infatuated with her, but believes she thinks he is laughable. Therefore, he analyzes everything she does, consciously or not, and interprets her actions as a way that seems designed to get under his skin, to show him that he is not worth her time; a look in his direction, a sentence, anything is viewed as an attack on his part. On the other hand, when he feels he can have her, he loses all interest and is satisfied with the thought that things could have worked out between them had he really wanted them to. Fante is cited as one of Bukowski's main influences, and although it is easy to compare the two, *Ask the Dust* is also very different from anything Bukowski has written. Women are definitely muses in Fante's writing as well, but they bring forth a sense of paranoia and hopelessness produced by Bandini's inability to believe in himself, the quality of his work as a writer, or his worth as a human being.

Mordechai Richler's last novel, *Barney's Version* is the only one he wrote in the first-person point of view. While Barney's opinions do not always reflect Richler's, he displays much

of the wit and sarcasm that has become the author's trademark over the years. The story is built in three parts, each representing one of Barney's marriages, and it goes without saying that women serve as muses in this case. Richler structured the novel as Barney's autobiography, written to settle the score with a long-time rival who happened to be a successful writer. Through his writing, he looks to settle the score with his rivals and also make amends with his three wives. The analysis of this novel will be quite different from the others, mainly due to Barney's social class. He is a successful television producer, and his opinions and lifestyle are different as a result. He indulges in much of the same vices as the other protagonists but only drinks the best scotches, smokes fine cigars, and marries instead of just chasing women. However, he might also be one of the most desperate characters, since he his heartbroken after having lost his wife Miriam, and does not have anything to look forward to since he suffers from Alzheimer, which is one of the reasons why he wants to write his book late in his life, before the disease takes over. He is self-absorbed and bitter, and blames a lot of his problems on others rather than on his own shortcomings. His condition means that the character does not grow, or change for the better as the story progresses, but gets worse and forgets things until his son Michael has to take the narration over when Barney dies. As an author, Richler has never compared been to either Bukowski or Fante, and approaching each of these three novelists through the problematic of gender performance and masculinity may allow for new insights into how the persona of the "curmudgeonly writer" is reflected in the characters, and how such public performances of masculinity are linked to traditionally male attitudes, activities, and ways of seeing the world.

Using the insights of feminist and gender studies and, more specifically, Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity allows a nuanced reading of the characters and to some extent, their

authors, and how their own masculinity shapes and motivate their views, opinions, and actions. A counterargument to the concept of hegemonic masculinity will also be useful for, as Stephen Whitehead argues, "the concept of hegemonic masculinity obscures the actual practices of men by presuming that they are guided by a collective interest and intentionality" (*The Nature of Masculinity*, 34). In the same vein, Steve Garlick discusses Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley's criticism of the single hegemony approach, where they argue that Connell's hierarchical schema of masculinities is "too neat and tidy and ignores both inconsistencies in the production of masculinities and the existence of multiple hegemonic masculinities" (Garlick 35). As different scholars come to different conclusions when it comes to gender and masculinity, the definition of what hegemonic masculinity means is left open. Since the novels chosen for this project take place from the 1930s to the 1990s, the notion of orthodox masculinity will be discussed as well, as it is the dominant form of masculinity within the historical time frame in which the characters of Bandini, Chinaski, and Barney are fictionalized.

In order to give a proper sense of how the characters deal with their environment and the different situations they live through, I argue that hegemonic masculinity and the patriarchal social model on which it is built are the main reasons why the characters perceive each other and their environments the way they do. Examples of the protagonists' relationship to alcohol, lovers, friends, gambling and sports will be used to unpack the performances of masculinity, and demonstrate the social contexts influencing their behaviour. Since Bukowski and Fante are known for their use of metafiction, as is the case with the novels chosen for this project, this aspect of masculine "performances" of authorship will also be discussed. For the protagonists, the act of writing serves as a way to affirm their masculine identity, as it gives them a purpose, and a way

to feel relevant in a world that they often feel alienated from. Their identity as writers gives them a route to perform their masculinity, as they can be seen as representing a certain public persona that their readers expect of them. This is particularly true in the case of Bukowski. Fante's character wants that status without obtaining it, while Richler's protagonist expresses his masculinity differently as he is not, nor does he aspire to be, a professional writer.

The aim of this thesis will therefore be to explore different aspects of the consequences of hegemonic masculinity, and how each protagonist responds to its social context. In each of the three selected novels, the protagonists live within the ethos of orthodox hegemonic masculinity, without any of them being explicitly conscious of its effects on them. Masculinity is thus expressed through the seduction of women, writing, fame, wealth, recognition, and "manly habits." Whereas hegemonic masculinity means the type of masculinity that puts certain men above others in terms of the hierarchy of social power, relegating other men to subordinate masculinities, orthodox masculinity is a type of masculinity that encourages behaviours such as homophobia, self-sacrifice, acceptance of pain and injury, risk-taking, and the marginalization of others (Anderson, 261). It is a masculinity that is associated with hegemony, since its particularities are performed by a large portion of men considered to be hegemonic.

In the first chapter, titled "Women: Relationships and Hegemonic Masculinity," I discuss the protagonists' troubled relationships with the opposite sex, arguing that they show the ways in which these protagonists are unable to answer to the social expectations generated by hegemonic masculinity; specifically, their attempts at being "real men" often result in romantic failures, in alienation from others, and in resentments that leads to treating others, especially women, badly. These relationships are often at the centre of the story, and cause the protagonists emotional

distress as well as intense self-doubt. At the same time, these relationships are crucial to the stories, and the women involved can be seen as both muses and catalysts to the protagonists' desires to write. That dichotomy offers an interesting angle to the problematic of the representation of masculinity, as it shows how powerless they feel with regards to the opposite sex, and how these interactions constantly occupy their thoughts. The ways in which women and the protagonists themselves are portrayed varies in accordance with public and private "personas," suggesting, as Butler makes clear, performative aspects of gender. Because the protagonists do not fit in the norms of hegemonic masculinity -- in fact often fail at masculinity -- they sometimes feel the need to act a certain way around women in order to feel good about themselves. The aim of this chapter, then, will be to understand why women are sometimes portrayed as virginal muse and at others as metaphorical "whore," and further, how that says much more about the protagonist's fragile sense of masculinity than it does about the women they interact with.

Chapter 2, titled "Writing and Masculinity: Expressing Oneself Within The Ethos of Hegemonic Masculinity", explores the act of writing itself as an extension of or performance of masculinity. In all three of the chosen novels, the main characters have an urge to write and to express themselves, and they see writing as an extension of their masculinity, their social acceptance and success. Bandini is an aspiring novelist who craves fame and recognition while unable to create something as grandiose as he would like, Chinaski is a successful writer who tells of his experiences and how his success transforms the way others see him, and Barney is writing a memoir in order to be remembered as he wishes to be. Their relationships to writing thus defines them as outcasts and often as failures. It influences the way in which people see them as well as their own judgment of the world that surrounds them. If they are unable to feel at ease within the

social norm, writing gives them a purpose, a reason to exist without feeling useless. Looking at the place writing takes in the characters' lives will help understand how they cope with their respective sense of accomplishment and even masculinity—for writing itself as a creative gesture may be understood as a masculinist desire to shape the world in some way.

The third chapter, titled "Vices: Indulging as a Performance of Hegemonic Masculinity", will examine the role that vices play in each of the protagonist's understanding and performance of their own masculinity. In *Women*, Chinaski is an alcoholic and a gambler, in *Barney's Version*, Barney is an alcoholic, and in *Ask the Dust*, Bandini is manipulative, obsessive, and impulsive when it comes to money and his desire for fame and recognition. "Vices" of all sorts are a common denominator in these novels, and such behaviours have an effect on the relationships these characters have with the world around them, and how they perceive people as well as how their masculinity is performed. As the objective in this chapter is to examine the way in which hegemonic masculinity influences the protagonists' daily habits and ways of being in the world of the text, looking at what pushes them towards vices will give an indication of the pressure they face and how they cope with failure, stress, fatigue, and even happier moments. Vice may not only be seen as a kind of excess of appetite and thus failure of masculine self-control (Chinaski, Bandini), but may also be interpreted as a symbol of social status, as is the case for Barney Panofsky. Asking the question of why they drink, gamble, or aim to control the people around them will help understand what hegemonic masculinity in its orthodox form can do to men who feel unable to reach those standards, while also revealing how it helps them cope with the world.

Chapter 1

Women: Relationships and Hegemonic Masculinity

The focus of analysis in this chapter is how hegemonic masculinity affects the protagonists in their relationship with, and to, women. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity implies that certain behaviours are expected from men, who are seen as socially dominant over women, without these expected behaviours being explicit. Masculine hegemony, however, does not present realistic expectations for most, and as Connell states,

> The hegemonic form need not be the most common form of masculinity, let alone the most comfortable. Indeed, many men live in a state of some tension with, or distance from, the hegemonic masculinity of their culture or community. Other men, such as sporting heroes, are taken as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity and are required to live up to it strenuously—at what may be severe cost, in terms of injury, ill health, and other constraints of life (Messner 1992). The dominance of hegemonic masculinity over other forms may be quiet and implicit, but may also be vehement and violent, as in the case of homophobic violence. (*The Men and the Boys,* 10)

In other words, the standard established by successful men such as sporting heroes, famous musicians, businessmen, and others are not realistic for most men, and can lead some to act in ways that they think will get them accepted by others. The dichotomy between the star athlete and other forms of dominant men in the scope of hegemonic masculinity is highlighted by Connell as being in contrast with each other, as one champions athletic excellence, while the other

encourages unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking. As she interviews a young athlete on his habits and motivation, she points out that

> This is very much a problem about masculinity. Steve, the exemplar of masculine toughness, finds that his own exemplary status prevents him from doing exactly what his peer group defines as thoroughly masculine behaviour: going wild, showing off, drunk driving, getting into fights, defending his own prestige. (*The Men and the Boys,* 73)

In the novels studied here, the display of masculinity exhibited by the protagonists is closer to the second form referenced by Connell, as, despite some characters showing interest in sports (Chinaski and Panofsky) and in the athletes who are able to achieve the physical feats that set them as models and apart from the rest, they veer towards the self-destructive kind of masculinity described by Connell. As such, their relationships with women can be toxic, as is the case with Henry Chinaski. As someone who had a hard time socializing with women in his youth, he takes advantage of his status as a renowned writer to convince women to sleep with him. He is aware that his situation is abnormal, and expresses skepticism over his sudden abilities to seduce. As such, it sometimes feels as if he tries to sabotage his relationships, by knowingly having sex with multiple partners while the person he is with expects an exclusive relationship. However, as much as he acts like this kind of behaviour is the norm and that he is not bothered by his decisions, he still has a hard time justifying his actions to himself when he meets a woman that he feels has more to offer than physical pleasure. At one point, he loses his temper and states, "I couldn't understand what had happened to my life. I had lost my sophistication, I had lost my worldliness, I had lost my hard protective shell. I had lost my sense of humour in the face of other people's problems. [...] I was destined to continue feeling guilty and unprotected" (238-239). Then he

proceeds to go up to her to deliver the news: ""I was sobbing. The tears flowed like wine. I couldn't stop. Most of me meant it, the other part was running away. [...] "I can't be with you on thanksgiving." "Why? What's wrong?" "What's wrong is that I am a GIANT HUNK OF SHIT!" (240-241).

Despite knowing that he does not approve of his own actions before the fact, Chinaski still chooses to see other women, and this choice is influenced by hegemonic masculinity. The opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse with other women might have been a way for him to assert his position at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities in terms of what it meant to be a man in the the 1970s. Eric Anderson argues that orthodox masculinity might maintain socionegative attitudes toward women, with a sexist and misogynistic ethos associated to it (261). There are indeed numerous examples of Chinaski treating women in such ways throughout the novel, despite the shy and fragile nature he seems to exhibit at times such as the example above shows. As an established writer, he has reached a status envied by others, with people telling him how much they enjoy his work and his being able to gain certain privileges associated with his position, such as being flown in by universities in order to give a reading of his work. However, he shows aversion for that exercise, as it forces him to interact with others. In one instance, he has just finished a reading, and a poet approaches him to evaluate his poetry, to which he replies: "No I said, "wait! I don't want to hear them." "Why not, man? Why not?" "There's been too much poetry tonight, Morse. I just want to lay back and forget it." (*Women*, 141). This kind of attitude shows his discontent with the literary crowd with whom he does not feel acquainted nor comfortable, due to his introverted personality. It could also be interpreted as a consequence of orthodox hegemonic masculinity, as it displays a detachment that shows he is not impressed or

fazed by what he has accomplished. This behaviour fits his hard-living persona, and echoes Butler's theory of gender performativity, as he seems to act according to how people expect him to act as an aloof man. That same detachment is present in his relationships with women. Addressing the cathexis of emotional relations, Connell states,

> Desire is so often seen as natural, that it is commonly excluded from social theory. Emotion is, however, increasingly seen as an important topic for social theory (Barbadet, 1998). When we consider desire in Freudian terms, as emotional energy being attached to an object, its gendered character is clear. This is true both for heterosexual and homosexual desire. The practices that shape and realize desire are thus an aspect of the gender order. Accordingly, we can ask political questions about the relationships involved: whether they are consensual or coercive whether pleasure is equally given and received. In feminist analyses of sexuality these have become sharp questions about the connection of heterosexuality to men's position of social dominance. (25)

The way in which Chinaski approaches most of his relationships show that Connell's point is relevant here, as most of the time, it is more about sexual desire and conquest than it is about anything else. While Lydia and Sara are able to get him to show a softer side of his personality within the context of a relationship, most of the other women he encounters are not truly developed as characters, and he does not seem to care about giving them pleasure. His social position as a successful writer means that he has attained a dominant status, and therefore, these women are attracted to him; he knows it and often makes no effort to make these women feel like he cares about them.

At the beginning of the novel, Chinaski states, "I was 50 years old and hadn't been to bed with a woman for four years. I had no women friends. I looked at them as I passed them on the streets or wherever I saw them, but I looked at them without yearning and with a sense of futility" (Women 7). With such a statement as the opening paragraph of the novel, Connell's analysis seems relevant, as Chinaski did not have any seductive abilities nor did he try to have any prior to his success as a writer, but manages to turn his fortune around in his fifties. He knows that this change is related to his literary fame. There are multiple examples of this, such as April, a woman he meets at a party and who shows up at his house, a moment which Chinaski describes by recalling "'I've always admired your work," she said'"(35). Later on, he meets a woman named Dee Dee, and while they are having a conversation about his relationship with Lydia, he says "It must be that I'm just not good with the ladies," I said." To which she replies, "You're good enough with the ladies," Dee Dee said. "And you're a helluva writer" (50). Later on, he describes a correspondence with a woman, saying, "I kept getting letters from a lady who lived only a mile or so away. She signed them Nicole. She said she had read some of my books and liked them. I answered one of her letters and she responded with an invitation to visit" (65). These are just a few examples of how he is able to seduce women without much effort or care. However, there are two encounters that change his perspective, and his misogynistic views on women slowly evolve due to those encounters.

The first one, with Lydia Vance, represents his first romantic relationship in four years, as he states in the opening sentence of the novel. Much of the novel's first half is comprised of scenes of the two either being romantic with each other, or fighting, which highlights the cynical and embittered side of Chinaski's personality. Early on, he states: "Lydia and I were always fighting.

She was a flirt and it irritated me. When we ate out I was sure she was eyeballing some man across the room. When my male friends came by to visit and Lydia was there, I could hear her conversation become intimate and sexual. She always sat very close to my friends, positioning herself as near them as possible" (33). This illustrates Chinaski's insecurities when it comes to his relationships, and despite the fact that he is not always faithful to her, he is irritated when she flirts with other men.

This reaction can be linked to Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity and Anderson's orthodox masculinity, as it seems like there is a double standard when it comes to sexual partners, depending on whether the subject is a man or a woman. Hegemonic orthodox masculinity means that a so-called "real" man should be in control of any situation, in control of his emotions, and strong. The description given by Chinaski here, however, shows jealousy, powerlessness, and annoyance. If a man is supposed to be able to seduce multiple women to assert his seductive power, a woman should be obedient to what is seen as a man in control, and the fact that Lydia gets back at him by giving him a taste of his own medicine, renders him useless in his own mind. As his relationship with her progresses, the fighting increases, and despite knowing that the situation is bad for both of them, he keeps on going back to her, as he seems unable to tell her how he really feels. In one instance, he has a short romance going on with Mindy, a woman whom he met after she had written him a letter about how she admired his work. By that point, things are not going well with Lydia, and the two have separated. Despite this, she reacts badly when she learns of Mindy's existence and confronts Chinaski about it, resulting in a fight between the two women. When the police arrive at his door, they ask, "Which of the two women do you want?" to which he replies: "I'll take that one." I pointed over to Lydia sitting in the chair, all

pissed over herself. “All right, sir, are you sure?” “I’m sure.” The cops walked off and there I was with Lydia again” (80). If the scene suggests, at least from the point of view of the officer’s gaze, that women are “interchangeable,” it also shows Chinaski’s conflicted personality, for he still has feelings for Lydia despite their mutual attitude towards each other. This pushes him to see other women while not being able to either end or commit to that relationship. As a result, he fails at establishing his persona as a dominant orthodox man, and is forced to show himself as someone who is more sensitive and vulnerable than he would like to be perceived.

Another relationship that defines Chinaski’s perception of women, is the one he has with Sara. She is calm, and seems to have a reassuring effect on Chinaski, as she does not appear to be the type of woman he is normally attracted to. With the exception of Lydia, Chinaski makes it clear that he likes his relationship to be devoid of complications, which often leads to them being short term, as he seems to lose interest when feelings are involved. As Russell Harrison points out, a lot of Bukowski’s early criticism was pointed towards his portrayal of women, stating that “his depiction of women has changed significantly over the third of a century in which he has been writing. […] there was an increased subtlety of characterization, a more nuanced treatment of psychological dynamics, and less reliance on stereotypes” (183). He goes on, stating that:

> women are rarely presented independent of their relationship with Chinaski. By the time Bukowski came to write *Women*, however, this had begun to change and his depiction of women and sexual relationships gradually shifted to crude descriptions of events and flat characterizations of women to fuller descriptions, more rounded characterizations, and female characters who, it was suggested, had lives outside the orbit of Henry Chinaski. (183-184)

As Chinaski is often considered as Bukowski's alter ego, the two have often been linked together by critics, as is the case with Harrison here. Within the novel itself, there is a change of perspective on the part of Chinaski, as Lydia, who is the first woman introduced to the reader in the novel, comes off as rude and annoying to Chinaski, whereas as the story progresses and Sara is introduced, a change in his attitude can be observed. He seems to react with more patience and poise to the challenges presented to him, whether they are related to his relationships or not. For example, when he makes his way to meet her at her restaurant and gets lost on the highway, rather than going back home to avoid the trouble, he phones her and says, "I'm sorry, you see, I have no sense of direction. I've always had nightmares about getting lost. I believe I belong on another planet" (219). Not only does this moment see him remain calm and patient in a situation where he normally would not, judging from how he handled previous challenges like this (his relationship with Lydia is a good example), he also shows her vulnerability and admits that he feels alienated. This is unusual for Chinaski when it comes to his relationship, especially within the scope of orthodox hegemonic masculinity.

Sara is presented as an independent woman and business owner with a spiritual side, who is not impressed by Chinaski's status and therefore does not react the way he would like her to, to his mannerisms that usually allow him to seduce women who are familiar with his literary work. As the usual behaviour associated with hegemonic masculinity does not seem to work when it comes to Sara, Chinaski slowly realizes that his actions do not represent the best version of himself, something that he aims at correcting after he becomes romantically involved with her. Towards the end of the novel, he states, "Sara was a good woman. I had to get myself straightened out. The only time a man needed a lot of women was when none of them were any good. A man

could lose his identity fucking around too much. Sara deserved much better than I was giving her. It was up to me now" (290).

As Chinaski himself talks about a man's identity, the parallel between his thoughts and Connell and Butler's theories cannot be overlooked. Chinaski's identity as a hard-living writer seems to be closely associated to his success with women, and yet that statement implies that prior to meeting Sara, he had trouble figuring out who he really was as a person. The social climate in which a man asserts his dominance over others by the amount of "sexual conquests" he can achieve seems to have taken its toll on him, and Sara makes him realize that the way he behaved might not be his "natural self", and upon taking notice of this, instead of feeling sorry for himself, he vows to be a better person. Therefore, Sara's presence in his life makes him forget about his social status as a writer and how the public perceives him. She makes him reflect on his values and how he would like to think of himself, as well as what he can do to make sure that Sara thinks highly of him. Whereas with other women he is insistent that they should have sex, he shows patience and understanding with Sara, saying, "we slept together but there was no sex. We came close, but we never quite got to it. Drayer Baba's precepts held strong"(261). Not only does he respect her choice of not having sex, he also has no problem with her spiritual beliefs, something that he had not shown much tolerance for prior to meeting, Sara. The end of the novel shows a man that decides to change for his own happiness rather than stay the way he is for his public image. It confirms that the way he had acted prior to that assessment was brought on by the social climate of being a man in a culture dominated by orthodox masculinity.

In John Fante's *Ask the Dust*, Arturo Bandini's relationships are full of examples of the consequences of hegemonic masculinity on his behaviour, but his general attitude is quite

different from that of Chinaski. If Chinaski is a character that can appear jaded and uncomfortable at times, he has figured out a way to survive on his own terms, and his successful career as a writer puts him in a position where he can be self-confident, and where people admire him. Bandini on the other hand, is unknown, poor, and uninspired. As a result, he has no self-confidence. Therefore, his relationships with women do not meet his personal expectations, which puts him in a position where he often feels unworthy of love or respect from anyone. Whereas Chinaski had multiple love interests before truly falling in love with Sara, Bandini's love interest is centred around Camilla, a woman of Mexican origin who works as a waitress in a café close to where he lives. To Bandini, everything Camilla does has something to do with him. He watches her interacting with other clients, and goes on about how what she says to them or what she does is meant to irritate, or impress him. To that effect, he states:

> I saw her glance down quickly and examine her feet, so that in a few minutes she no longer laughed, instead, there was a grimness in her face, and finally she was glancing at me with bitter hatred. Now I was exultant, strangely happy. I felt relaxed. The world was of uproariously amusing people. (…) she had not collected the nickel for the coffee. She would have to do so unless I left it on the table and walked out. But I wasn't going to walk out. I waited. (…) she didn't look at me anymore, but I knew she knew I watched her. (36)

In this excerpt, Bandini does not feel in control of the situation. The fact that, according to himself, he finally has an influence on her mood, makes him feel good, as if he meant something to the world. Camilla has made such an impression on him, that he has to make her aware that he

exists, even if this means that by his actions, she might not have a positive opinion of him. As an Italian immigrant, his identity as an American is of importance to him, and as someone who struggles to get the recognition he craves for his work as a writer, he tries to get noticed by others with his eccentric behaviour. As stated by Elizabeth Bracey in her memoir titled "California Grotesques: Torture, Fiction, and Ethnic Identity in John Fante's *Ask the Dust*:"

> Bandini's obsession with becoming successful is conflated with his unrelenting desire to solidify his American identity. Finding his identity comes at the expense of the people he loves as well as others around him, as Bandini brutalizes Camilla, the woman he loves, physically and verbally, and denies the needs of others he meets in order to validate himself and his place in the American west. (2)

Analyzed in the scope of Connell and Butler's theories, his American identity as an Italian immigrant can be linked to masculinity, as being an American man in the 1930s meant being in control and acting "manly," in the way Eric Anderson describes as being part and parcel of orthodox masculinity. Therefore, by treating Camila as though she is worth less than he is, he performs what he thinks is expected of him in order to be respected by his peers, rather than acting like a person would towards another human being he loves. Whenever his obsession for Camilla comes into question, he feels the need to put her down, critiquing her clothes, appearance, conversations they have, and anything else to make himself seem superior to her. In a moment where he feels helpless, he writes her a letter saying, "Dear Ragged Shoes, You may not know it, but last night you insulted the author of this story. Can you read? If so, invest fifteen minutes of your time and treat yourself to a masterpiece. And next time, be careful. Not everyone who comes into this dive is a bum" (39). Addressing her as "Dear Ragged Shoes," immediately emphasizes

the fact that he does not respect her, and that he has noticed her lack of funds for what he deems to be proper attire, while not being able to be financially comfortable himself. He has to convince his landlady that he can pay in order to rent a room, but does not hesitate to insult Camilla on her appearance, saying, "Those huaraches—do you have to wear them, Camilla? Do you have to emphasize the fact that you always were and always will be a filthy little greaser? She looked at me in horror, her lips open. Clasping both hands against her mouth, she rushed inside the saloon. I heard her moaning. "Oh oh, oh" (44). This kind of language clearly shows that he is trying to elicit a reaction from her, even if he knows that by doing so, he will hurt her and most likely sabotage their relationship.

As the story progresses, they keep on seeing each other, feeding on one another's misery to make themselves feel better. As hegemonic masculinity in the 1930s was centred on the kind of orthodox performance that implied physical strength, Craig Heron in his paper "Boys Will be Boys: Working-Class Masculinities in the Age of Mass Production" states that,

> applying muscular strength on the job, coping with the heat and grime of the workplace (…) drinking for pleasure (and to get drunk), playing demanding sports, performing sexually, fighting with and violently assaulting others, and swaggering, shouting, whistling, singing, swearing, belching, and farting in deliberately performative ways… Working-class male bodies were the source of claims to class pride within demeaning wage labour, gender superiority over allegedly weaker women, and, in an age or imperialist excess, racial triumph over the "lesser breeds." Their bodies had to be developed to meet the social demands put on them. (6-8)

Throughout the novel, it becomes clear that Bandini does not possess most of these physical attributes, and therefore, has a hard time establishing his "gender superiority" over Camilla. She appears as an independent woman who can do the things men do better than Bandini, such as driving a car, and shooting guns. As he is humiliated by his defeat at the shooting range, he tries to restore a sense of his own gender superiority when they go to the beach and she appears to be drowning. There, he desperately tries to save her, risking his own life while swimming, only to realize that she was playing with him the whole time and that she was now waiting for him on a different part of the beach. Feeling humiliated, he responds by emotionally detaching himself from her, saying,

> "I was speechless, […] I drew my hands over her belly and legs, felt my own desire, searched foolishly for my passion, strained for it while she waited, rolled and tore my hair and begged for it, but there was none, there was none at all, only the retreat to Hackmuth's letter and thoughts that remained to be written, but no lust, only fear of her, and shame and humiliation." (68)

Every time he tries to make himself feel good about how manly he is and how Camila needs him and feels strong sexual attraction towards him, she finds a way to remind him that she is an independent woman, and that being with him is her choice rather than an attempt at becoming somebody through his presence, which unsettles him. Bandini gives the impression that he sees her as a kind of "princess in a castle" that needs him to change her fortune, and he has a hard time coming to terms with the fact that he cannot act as her saviour. Furthermore, Camila is seeing Sammy, another man who seems to have a strong negative psychological effect on her, which is the effect that Bandini seems to be trying to have on her, with mitigated success. This leads him

to develop an animosity towards Sammy, which in turn fuels the one he already feels for Camilla. In terms of the orthodox variation of hegemonic masculinity in which the competition between men is incessant , Sammy is a menace to Bandini, as they are both Camilla's lovers. This threatens Bandini's control as well as leaving Camilla in a state of distress, as Sammy treats her even worse than Bandini does. In a letter addressed to Bandini, Sammy writes, "the trouble with you, Mr. Bandini, is that you don't know how to handle her. You're too nice to that girl. You don't understand Mexican women. They don't like to be treated like human beings. If you're nice to them, they'll walk all over you" (121).

The fact that Camilla is of Mexican heritage comes into question here, as it challenges Arturo's masculinity by way of his desire to be accepted not only as a man, but as an American, makes his feelings for her ambivalent. Here, Sammy brings ethnicity and race into question by mentioning that Mexican girls have to be treated differently than American girls. Bandini, as an Italian American longing for acceptance, sees her as unworthy of his time despite his lust for her. Melissa Ryan argues that "Camilla's most important feature for him is the ethnicity that simultaneously attracts and repels him" (204). As much as she fascinates him, the image that Sammy and Bandini have of her is constructed around her ethnicity more than around who she is as a person, and both men view her racialized identity, much like her gender, as yet another aspect of her identity that makes them feel superior.

This once again highlights the nature of the hegemonic masculinity in place at the time where women were treated as a man's possession rather than as an equal, and Sammy makes it clear that he considers Camilla as inferior not only because she is a woman, but more specifically because she is a woman of Mexican origins. By doing so, Sammy also attacks Bandini's

masculinity, asserting that he is more of a man than Bandini is because he knows how to treat Camilla, implying that Bandini is weak and does not know how to handle her. By saying that he is too nice to her, he attacks Bandini's fears at their core, as his "weaknesses" with Camilla reflect his insecurities towards himself and other men. Acting like he does with Camilla signifies that he is trying to prove something to himself, and to others around him. He tries to act tough with her to show his superiority and control, which once again echoes Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity as a social construct empowering men. She states that,

> masculinities are neither programmed in our genes, nor fixed by social structures, prior to social interaction. They come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting [….] they result from a sustained, active engagement with the demands of the institutional setting, even to the point of serious bodily damage from 'playing hurt' and accumulated stress. (*The Men and the Boys,* 12)

This statement represents the social pressure felt by Bandini, and it seems to affect him in ways that force him to into behaviour patterns that appear "unnatural" to him. Whenever he acts a certain way that seems to be forced, he is actually projecting himself as being surrounded by greatness and approval, whether it is his success with women, or as a writer. The following excerpt illustrates this, showing how hegemonic masculinity influences his perception of himself, but also how it makes him long for the approval of women:

> And she was there too, proud as hell of me, the lady in the silver fox fur. We registered and then we had cocktails and then we danced awhile, and then we had another cocktail and I recited some lines from Sanskrit, and the world was so wonderful, because every

two minutes some gorgeous one gazed at me, the great author, and nothing would do but I had to autograph her menu, and the silver fox girl was very jealous. (13)

As he daydreams about changing the perception of women towards him, there is a sense that he believes that fame, success, and recognition would change how others view him, and therefore, his own opinion of himself. To him, a man's reputation has to do with social accomplishments, whereas women are judged and admired in terms of their physical beauty and desirability, and are never considered as anything more. In order to be attractive to them, Bandini feels that he has to be successful and wealthy, whereas in order for him to be attracted to women, their bodies are all that matter. In the previous excerpt, the lady in the silver fox fur would be jealous because he has the attention of another beautiful woman, and the reason behind it would be because of his accomplishments as a writer rather than his physical appearance.

When Connell discusses the resources and strategies available in a given social setting, it highlights the fact that Bandini's story is set in the 1930s, when the social expectations that came with being a man in the United States dictated Bandini's attitudes and relationship with Camilla to the point of rendering it unbearable for the both of them. It seems clear that Bandini's insecurities and the way he tries to counteract them in his social contacts and relationship with women are influenced by orthodox hegemonic masculinity in the social context he lives in. While orthodox hegemonic masculinity has a negative impact on Bandini when it comes to his relationships, as it makes him feel alienated to the point where he acts irrationally in the hopes of corresponding to a certain ethos, some men are perfectly at ease with hegemonic masculinity without being conscious of its existence.

In Mordecai Richler's *Barney's Version*, the narrator, Barney Panofsky, puts a particular emphasis on the women that had an impact in his life, as the novel, presented as his autobiography, is divided in three chapters, each representing one of his three marriages. In each of them, he appears as self-sufficient, angry, and impatient, and tends to blame most of his shortcomings on others, including the women around him. As the novel spans multiple decades from the 1950s to the 1990s, it is interesting to note that the many social changes that occurred during this period, from expanded individualism to sexual liberation, to the radical changes in women's empowerment in the 1960s, exposes Barney to criticism and shows his limited perspective. His first marriage takes place during the 1950s, and is to a troubled artist named Clara Charnofsky, whom he met while travelling in Europe. As she commits suicide at a young age and is later championed as a feminist icon, Barney is later accused by her admirers of having triggered her depression by rejecting her, which infuriates him. As he remembers her, she is often the cause of anti-feminist rants on his part. As Shana Rosenblatt Mauer states in her article, "Women in Mordecai Richler's Novels: Is There a Problem?"

> Barney is rightly indignant to be labelled as Clara's tormentor. It is Clara who tricks Barney into marriage when she is pregnant with another man's child. Moreover, during her life she was uninterested in any manifestation of feminism, even though her life story itself could be read as a feminist statement. While Clara's followers are depicted as duped foot soldiers in a feminist power struggle, the novel portrays the evolution of the Clara Charnofsky Foundation as a model of politically correct extremism. (181)

It seems here that despite Barney's openly misogynistic views when it comes to Clara being identified as a feminist, the circumstances regarding her mental health and well-being in general,

make it difficult to analyze the character as misogynist based on this relationship alone. He is blamed for her death while she was in fact mentally unstable. Barney never addresses the fact that he might have played a part in her troubles, which he explains as being caused by a traumatic childhood, drug abuse, and a predisposition for mental illness. As her father relates, "she was twelve years old and she began to tear her hair out in clumps for a how-do-you-do. (…) Then it started. what am I talking? It had already started. The craziness. (…) so eventually we had to force open her mouth (…) and then she would vomit all over me on purpose" (150). Barney claims that his decision not to continue the relationship with her was based on her unfaithfulness and the fact that she got pregnant by someone else while making Barney think the baby was his. With that in mind, it is understandable that the fact that he is associated with her death while she is revered as a great artist and a martyr leaves him confused and angry. However, while his opinion and respect toward Miriam show somewhat of a better understanding of women in general, he remains a self-centred character with a misogynistic discourse that is increasingly frowned upon as he gets older.

While he treats the other women in his life with more respect than how he remembers treating Clara, they remain a way for him to elevate himself above other men and women, and to prove that he is worth their attention. As Barney introduces Clara to the reader, he presents her as "a compulsive dirty talker, who contributed the most imaginative but outlandish pornographic ideas to Boogie, which was surprising, considering what I then took to be her problems" (55). As an introduction to the character, it seems clear that Barney retains bad memories of their time together, and that his experience with her has an influence on how he treats women in general, as she is presented as his first true love interest. The pace of the story is interesting since it is all told through the eyes of a main character who is approaching the end of his life, and therefore, the

perspective with which he tells the story is influenced by his memories rather than being told as it happens. This implies that his views do not belong to the past, but are rooted in what he believes to be true at the moment he is telling the story. When it comes to Clara, he is still unhappy about how things turned out, not because what happened to her was tragic, but because it affected his own reputation. He describes her as "Skinny enough for a rib count. Her hands constantly in movement, adjusting her shawls, smoothing her skirts, brushing back her hair, peeling the labels off wine bottles. Her fingers were nicotine and ink-stained, her nails broken or bitten to the quick. Ears the shape of teacup handles protruded from her hair—" (57).

Once again, this kind of description is meant to diminish her, to make her appear as frantic and unhealthy. Just as Bandini had done with the Silver Fox Fur Lady, Clara is here described in terms of her body rather than any of her qualities, which suggests Barney's manner of gazing upon women through his lens of orthodox masculinity. As Anderson pointed out, one of the characteristics that defines this type of behaviour is to constantly put down other people in order to appear manly. When Barney describes women, with the exception of Miriam, he always puts the emphasis on either their physical attributes, or how obnoxious they are. There is a sense that respectable and intelligent women represent an obstacle or a threat to him, and that he will go out of his way to highlight their faults. Women Like Chantal and Solange are spared that treatment, but they serve a purpose to him, as they help him not only in his work environment, but they also take care of him personally towards the end of his life.

Throughout the novel, Barney constantly puts down the idea of feminism. As an example, when he reads an article entitled "Feminist Outrage at Chain Gangs for Women," he calls it a, "knee-slapper of a story in this morning's Gazoo" that he decides he must "clip and mail to the

enchanting Ms. Morgan of "Dykes on Mikes"" (217). This shows his disdain for strong women who do not have anything to offer him in terms of their desirability, and proves that he does not care about most women in their complexity as individuals, but rather sees them mainly as sexual objects. This confirms Barney's association to orthodox masculinity, considering that "orthodox masculinity looks disparagingly at femininity and thus helps reproduce patriarchy" (Anderson, 261). He goes on to say that "To sustain a given pattern of hegemony requires the policing of men and the exclusion or discrediting of women" (261).

Barney's attitude towards Clara reflects a certain patriarchal belief that women "were regarded as socially, intellectually, and physically inferior to men as a consequence of various discriminatory, sexist practices that illegitimately presumed women were unsuited for or incapable of assuming certain positions" (Grosz 50). There is a clear undertone in Barney's thoughts and actions that he thinks he is better than she is, and that she is an unpleasant and unstable person. One might think that speaking about a deceased person would add nuance to how he felt about her at the time, but Barney seems to be holding on to his resentment, in part because of the symbol Clara has become, which places her "above" him in terms of the social respectability of that time period. Whereas at the time of her death, he represented her as tragedy in his life, as time goes on, she is a constant reminder of his own failures. This makes him seem like a selfish and uncaring person. As he gets older, Clara's memory is revered, and he finds himself unable to defend his reputation properly from the accusations made against him. As a result, he becomes resentful, and turns the sadness and incomprehension he once felt into anger.

The second part of the novel describes Barney's second marriage to the unnamed "Second Mrs. Panofsky." The short-lived union that lasted from 1958 to 1960, corresponds to the period

in which he fell in love with his third wife, Myriam, doing so on the night of his wedding to Mrs. Panofsky. From the start of that relationship, it is clear that Barney is annoyed with the Second Mrs. Panofsky, and the fact that he does not even bother to name her in his story speaks to how little she matters to him. He marries her in order to fit in the social expectations that come with his Jewish heritage, but does so reluctantly, making sure that he follows the protocol of what is seen as a suitable Jewish husband. Remembering a trip to New York in the early stage of their romance, he says:

> We stayed at the Algonquin, booked into separate bedrooms, which I insisted on, eager to play by the rules. I could have happily passed that interlude wandering aimlessly, drifting in and out of bookshops and bars, but she was locked into a schedule that would have required a fortnight for a normal person to fill. (…) Yes, The Second Mrs. Panofsky was an exemplar of that much-maligned phenomenon, the Jewish-American Princess, but she succeeded in fanning my then-dying embers into something resembling life. (…) The Second Mrs. Panofsky was not a bad person. Had she not fallen into my hands but instead married a real, rather than a pretend, straight arrow, she would be a model wife and mother today. She would not be an embittered, grossly overweight hag, given to diddling with New Age crystals and consulting trance channellers. (192)

This is another example of how hegemonic masculinity makes women relevant in terms of their bodies more than their personal and professional accomplishments or qualities, as when he talks about her failures, he immediately mentions her weight. His discourse when he talks about her is filled with contempt, and it seems like every memory of their time together has a negative connotation. While he does admit that he is at fault for what happened to her over time, he does

so by immediately following those thoughts with derogatory terms towards her in order to diminish her and deny his own culpability. The fact that the two were married because Barney wanted to meet the Jewish community's traditional social standard highlights the social pressure that he felt as a man to fit in his circle, He is not in love with his wife, and does not feel anything but resentment towards her. On the other hand, The Second Mrs. Panofsky has genuine feelings for Barney, which puts him in a position of social dominance and control over her, as she becomes vulnerable to his lack of real love toward her. She is always looking for some kind of approbation on his part, and his constant rejection of her in a situation where they are supposedly in love confuses her, and makes their relationship hard to live with. Even on the night of their wedding, where one might expect mutual feelings of love, he gets infatuated with Miriam, the woman who will become his third wife, and completely ignores The Second Mrs. Panofsky as she tries to connect with him on an emotional level. That night, he has eyes only for Miriam, and when the time comes to consummate their union, he chooses to chase Miriam to the train station instead, creating a bizarre situation with The Second Mrs. Panofsky:

> Knocking timorously on the door of our overnight suite in the Ritz, I braced myself, anticipating the worst, but to my amazement The Second Mrs. Panofsky greeted me with a hug, compounding my guilt. "Oh thank God you're safe," she said. "I didn't know what to think." (…) The Second Mrs. Panofsky lowered me into a chair, wet a towel in the bathroom, and returned to dab my scraped kneecap. (216)

Afterwards, he tells her that she deserves a better man, and that he would understand if she wanted a divorce. He acts in ways that are designed to make her angry and sad at him, and yet she remains patient and understanding, until the relationship becomes so bad that Barney catches her in bed

with another man. Once again, this echoes the social dominance of hegemonic masculinity, as with The Second Mrs. Panofsky being the one who was caught cheating, Barney is free of any wrongdoings, as he has a perfect excuse to ask for divorce without being judged by others for doing so.

Barney's third marriage is the one that seems right for him, as Miriam and Barney's love for each other is genuine, and the two start a family with hopes of spending the rest of their lives together. However, as Miriam acts as a symbol of Barney's bad life choices and regrets, it is made clear from the beginning of the story that they are now divorced, and that Barney is extremely jealous of her new lover, Dr. Blair Hopper. As the novel is written in autobiographical style, it entails that Barney constantly looks back to his past to tell the stories as he remembers them, going back and forth between different periods of his life. When talking about the present, Miriam constantly comes up in his thoughts as a reminder of the consequences of his life choices, particularly of cheating on Miriam which he quickly comes to regret, resenting himself and the people around him for his actions. As Blair Hopper was Barney and Miriam's cottage neighbour before becoming intimate with Miriam, Barney already harvested negative feeling towards him. He was able to capture Miriam's attention with things Barney had no interest for, and therefore, Barney sees him as a rival. He describes him as "tall. Straw-haired, blue-eyed, and broad-shouldered. He would have looked nifty in an SS uniform" (317). Once again, Barney follows a compliment with an insult, putting himself above Blair in a way that can be tied to Anderson's theory of orthodox masculinity, as he highlights the need to constantly put down others in order to put oneself above the rest: "because of the sexist and (often) misogynistic ethos associated with the presence of orthodox masculinity among men (…) the performance of femininity by men, or

transgression of masculinized boundaries, is deemed highly contentious and is severely penalized" (Anderson, 261). Barney antagonizes him from the start, calling him "a draft dodger, like Dan Quayle and Bill Clinton, and consequently, a hero to his students. As for me, I'm dumbfounded that anybody would prefer Toronto to Saigon" (*Barney's Version* 14). By saying that Blair being a draft-dodger makes him a hero to his students, he gives a pejorative impression of universities as a whole, by implying that the people attending such an institution do not possess courage, and champion cowardice. Barney sees himself a "self-made man" who was the only one in his social circle not to attend university, which once again, puts him above the others who could challenge him within the paradigm of orthodox masculinity. Connell points out that "the reaction of the 'failed' is likely to be a claim to other sources of power, even other definitions of masculinity. Sporting prowess, physical aggression, or sexual conquest may do. Indeed, the reaction is often so strong that masculinity as such is claimed for the cool guys, with boys who follow an academic path being defined as 'effeminate' (137)." As Blair is a university professor, it is natural for Barney to diminish him because he is an intellectual, since Barney's success is based on wealth and "manly" pursuits rather than writing or other "intellectual" endeavours.

Whereas Chinaski and Bandini are uncomfortable with the idea of social expectations and both express their frustration towards the context in which they live, Barney embraces it. Chinaski has attained a privileged status because of his writing, but is still at odds with others and does not conform to the expectations of most of the people around him. He is still marginalized, which is what puts him in a favourable position, since it allows him to perform his masculinity as that could-not-care-less character he has created and that his readers expect to see. Barney, on the other hand, embraces the social context in which he evolves, and tries to work it to its advantage.

He has money, expensive tastes, a respected status in the Jewish community, and takes pride in seeing himself as being above others, as someone who knows better. His motivation to write his memoir comes from that trait of character, and it is no different with the women in his life. Addressing the issue of misogyny in Richler's novels, Shana Rosenblatt points out that "Miriam is an intellectual, an avid reader, and classical music aficionada, but like Nancy Hersh in *St. Urbain's Horseman* (1971) and Pauline Shapiro in *Joshua Then and Now* (1980), she is first and foremost a model wife, wholly devoted to her husband and children. Their careers are either nonexistent or irrelevant to their role as devoted caregivers" (179).

From Barney's point of view as someone who is openly misogynistic and has an overall sour attitude towards women, it is convenient to view Miriam as such, but once she divorces him, she resumes her career as a jazz host on CBC radio, which leaves Barney in shambles as he listens to her every night, remembering the past. Ultimately, he ends up bitter and alone, despite his earlier successes in life, with his divorce to Miriam standing out as his biggest regret. The way he treated his three wives throughout his life shows the influence of social discourses around masculinity and what it meant to be a man at that time with his own sense of self. He shows vulnerability after what happens to his marriage with Miriam, but overall excuses himself from his behaviour with women, putting the blame on others rather than acknowledging most of his faults.

While Chinaski, Bandini, and Barney all come from different backgrounds and realities, their relationship with women are all affected by the social context in which they lived, contexts in which orthodox hegemonic masculinity was prevalent and definitive in

terms of each of their performance of masculinities and their sense of self vis-à-vis the women in their lives.

Whereas women are definitely a way for the protagonists to fulfill their desire to fit within the scope of orthodox hegemonic masculinity, writing is another way to accomplish that, and is a part of what makes them attractive or not to women. In the case of Chinaski, writing is what makes him appealing, as he is already a successful author at the time the novel takes place. For Bandini, however, literary success has yet to come, and he counts on it in order to get recognition from men and women alike and to position himself as a socially dominant man. As for Barney, writing is a way to exact revenge on those who have hurt his reputation, and by writing his memoirs, he can make sure that everybody knows how he was not at fault in the failings of his first two marriages, and most of the other unfortunate events in his life.

The next chapter explores each of the protagonists' approaches to writing, and how they interpret this activity of self-revelation as an act that ultimately helps them establish their masculinity.

Chapter 2

Writing and Masculinity: Expressing Oneself Within the Ethos of Hegemonic Masculinity

This chapter focuses on the protagonists negotiating their own sense of masculinity through their activities and identities as writers, whether through an unproblematic affirmation of the struggle to write as proof of their masculine credentials, or through a more troubled sense that their inability to write somehow taints their masculinity and is hence proof of their failure as men. Either way, it is clear that each of them is influenced by hegemonic masculinity in their own gender performances; to these characters, writing and creating stories is something that is very cathartic, and therefore, a way for them to affirm and even confirm their masculine identity. Chinaski, for example, uses his talents as a writer as an act of seduction, as he makes it clear that he is much better at communicating through writing than in face-to-face interpersonal encounters. His talents as a writer give him an aura with women that he would not possess otherwise, as he does not correspond to the physical expectations that come with the hegemonic norm. Furthermore, his writing not only allows him to seduce, but to express who he is, to the point where people come to expect "manly" behaviour from him due to his reputation as a writer.

If writing is a way for Chinaski to assert his masculinity, Bandini has not yet accomplished that with writing. To him, it represents the key to being perceived as a socially dominant man, as he struggles to find his place in 1930s Los Angeles. In his mind, writing will allow him to seduce, gain power through wealth, and become famous, confirming that he has his place among the elite and should be considered a "real" man by others. From the way he links the act of writing to the

body, to how he reacts when given the slightest recognition, writing is a masculine, but also obsessive act for Bandini.

For Barney Panofsky, writing represents a way to salvage what remains of a complicated life filled with tragedy and disappointment. Writing represents a masculine and even aggressive act to him, as it allows him to discredit anyone who might have done better than him in life, and whom he considered an obstacle to his own well-being. it is a way for him to settle old feuds, give revised versions of events that made him look bad in the past, and reaffirm his perceived superiority as a man. Writing is thus of central importance to all three protagonists as a way to communicate their sometimes unspeakable insecurities, and in each of the novels one can ascertain a strong link between the act of writing, and that of feeling like a "real" man.

Henry Chinaski lives as a professional writer, and *Women* is an account of his life while he has already made a mark on the literary scene in Los Angeles. Writing is bound up with his sense of self, and from the first page of the novel, he sets the tone by remembering the days when he was just starting out as a writer, saying:

> It was about 6 years ago and I had just quit a twelve year job as a postal clerk and was trying to be a writer. I was terrified and drank more than ever. I was attempting my first novel. I drank a pint of whiskey and two six packs of beer each night while writing. I smoked cheap cigars and typed and drank and listened to classical music on the radio until dawn. I set a goal of ten pages a night but I never knew until the next day how many pages I had written. I'd get up in the morning, vomit, then walk to the front room and look on the couch o see how many pages were there. I always exceeded my ten. Sometimes there

were 17, 18, 23, 25 pages. Of course, the work of each night had to be cleaned up or thrown away. It took me twenty one nights to write my first novel. (7)

From the start, it is understood that he is prepared to write at all cost, including that of quitting his job security and something that guaranteed him an income. While the novel details his relationship with women and goes into great detail on the "so-called vices" he indulges in, writing holds it all together. His relationships are made possible because of his notoriety as a writer, his alcohol abuse gets worse consequently, but he finally has a place in the literary world in which he can distinguish himself from others because of his talent. There are numerous instances in the novel where Chinaski admits that his persona as a writer is influenced by what people have come to expect of him, and that he takes pleasure in trying to live up to it. While reading some of his poems in a public reading, the crowd engages with him and the following ensues:

> How come you're not drunk?" "Henry Chinaski couldn't make it." I said I'm his brother Efram." I read another poem and then confessed about the antibiotics. I also told them it was against the rules to drink on the premises. Somebody from the audience came up with a beer. I drank it and read some more. Somebody else came up with another beer. Then the beers began to flow. The poems got better. (89)

There is certainly a sense that Chinaski enjoys alcohol and the effects associated with it, but he is also playing with the crowd in that particular instance, by giving them what they want, a character that they imagined him to be rather than the "real" Chinaski, who did not plan to get drunk that night. When speaking of the "real Chinaski," there is a sense that he sometimes acts as people want him to, as a character rather than his true self. The fact that he refers to himself as his brother and seems to take the whole situation as a joke, suggests that he is aware of what is expected of

him, and is annoyed by it even if in the end, he gives the audience what they want by discarding his original intentions not to drink. By doing so, the "character" takes over, and he willingly becomes a parody or an exaggerated version of himself. To that effect, Mike Ryan makes the point in his memoir, stating that "fame produces in Chinaski a new emotional vulnerability with fans and critics, his friends and girlfriends. His writing is now readily available to the viewing public, making the introverted Chinaski vulnerable to both criticism and adoration. He is now expected to live up to his name, so to speak, in both public appearances and his forthcoming writing" (2014, 46). Harrison advances a similar argument, saying that "Chinaski having achieved some fame as a writer (and his writing having been misinterpreted and distorted to present an image that is more his reader's projections than the texts'), has now become a prisoner of that distortion" (198). In other words, his identity as a writer is closely associated with his other (masculine) traits, and they often entangle in the reader's mind to form an ideal of the "cursed poet," with which the way of life is indistinguishable from the writing itself.

As Chinaski is known to be Bukowski's alter ego rather than a purely fictional character, they share many viewpoints, one being their hatred of nine-to-five proletarian jobs, which Chinaski had to endure for the majority of his life before making the choice to become a full-time writer. This is reflected in Chinaski's overall attitude, as his point of view on life and on writing is influenced by his hatred of work, and his life experience as a proletarian who despised every moment he spent having a day job. As Russell Harrison states, "No contemporary American novelist has treated work as extensively or intensively as Bukowski. The salient characteristic of Bukowski's first two novels is their focus on work" (123). Whereas *Women* tells the story of how he is now an established figure in the literary world, the first two novels in which he is the

protagonist focus on his years as either a postal clerk or a drifter, and gives a sense of what his life was like before he made the decision to become a full-time writer. As a result of his success, Chinaski is now free to occupy his daily life as he sees fit, but a lot of his identity hinges on his hatred of the mechanics of proletariat, and he is still vocal about how such a life can adversely affect a person. As a working man, Chinaski was told what to do and had to obey in order to survive, and even if that part of his life belongs to the past, it stays with him as a full-time writer. As masculine hegemony is described as mostly unattainable and something with which "many men live in a state of some tension with, or distance from" (Connell, 10), the humiliation of being dependent to others in order to survive has stayed with Chinaski from the points of view of both social class and gender. In his memoir, titled A Struggle of Self: Bukowski Juggling, Shifting, and Ultimately Failing at Solidifying His Identity (2013), Kyle R. Samuelson argues that Bukowski loses his identity in *Women* because he is no longer a working man and therefore,

> *Women* portrays Chinaski in a more settled (relatively) domesticated nature in comparison to some of his earlier poetry. Chinaski has the rent paid, he has money for booze every night, and he even has enough to provide for the varying, often "crazed" women that float in and out of his life. These various women complicate and confuse the internal stable self he had built around drinking and writing. (4)

However, it can be argued that Chinaski's end goal was always to become a writer, and that on the contrary, *Women* sees him blossom as a version of himself that is more authentic than it had ever been before. Whereas in prior years he had to conform to certain social norms in order to keep his job and be able to make ends meet, he now has the freedom of living his life as he pleases. Even if he conforms to certain social norms in his new life, they are less grueling and obvious

than they were before he had achieved success as a writer. As previously discussed by Heron when he states that "working-class male bodies were the source of claims to class pride within demeaning wage labor" (8), I argue that the expectations of being a man changes with their social class and status within the hegemony. The grueling physical work is not expected of Chinaski anymore, and he is free to explore his artistic side without hassle. Connell states that "a good deal of the work done in working-class circumstances is manual work—assembling refrigerators, making steel, cleaning floors, serving food, driving trucks, cutting coal, sewing dresses. Class used often to be named by speaking of 'blue-collar' versus 'white-collar' jobs" (104). Chinaski experiences this change in social class, and as the expectations change, he retains his contempt of the proletarian world, and remains bitter when reminiscing about those times.

Writing is a desire he could no longer ignore at the time of the events depicted in *Women,* and he is allowed to be himself rather than to be subject to someone else's orders. If his motivations can be unclear such as when he states "I'm just an alcoholic who became a writer so that I would be able to stay in bed until noon" (Women 222), it can be linked to the social context of hegemonic orthodox masculinity, as the character of Chinaski as imagined from his readers' perspective is someone who writes to be able to live a hedonistic lifestyle without answering to anyone. Multiple times in the novel however, it is understood that writing is essential to Chinaski's mental health, and that it allows him to cope with the world around him with a sense of purpose, as demonstrated when he says "There's no way I can stop writing, it's a form of insanity" (98). Whereas before he was hoping to have enough free time to write, it is now a reality, and so he does not have to worry about his identity as a working-class man and can focus to what he always aspired to be, a writer. With a declaration like this one, it appears clear that contrary to

Samuelson's claim, Chinaski's end goal and sense of self was always that of a being a writer. In a world ruled by orthodox masculinity, where being a "real man" implies doing whatever is necessary to attain the top of the gender hierarchy, it can be challenging to project an image of such strict codes of masculinity all while pursuing a career as a writer. Chinaski however, does so in a way that puts him in a position where he is seen as a hardened man, something which Connell addresses as part of the dichotomy of hegemonic masculinity, by illustrating that an athlete represents the pinnacle of masculinity: "This is very much a problem about masculinity. Steve, the exemplar of masculine toughness, finds that his own exemplary status prevents him from doing exactly what his peer group defines as thoroughly masculine behaviour: going wild, showing off, drunk driving, getting into fights, defending his own prestige" (p.73). Being a writer allows Chinaski to set himself apart from others by having a unique talent and using it to make a living, but it also allows him to do all of these other things that made you a man at a time when orthodox masculinity was the social norm; he goes to boxing matches, flies around the country to give readings, sees multiple women at the same time, gets drunk, goes to bed late and wakes up late, all of which define and are defined by identity as a writer, as he could never do all of these things when he was working at the post office or drifting from job to job and from city to city in order to makes ends meet.

There are numerous instances in *Women* where Chinaski talks about the act of writing as the only thing he can do well and the only thing that he truly loves doing. The quote mentioned earlier about it being a disease serves as an example, and the fact that he prefers to be left alone rather than attend literary parties where he is sure to get recognition from others, shows that he writes for other reasons than fame, even if he enjoys some of the advantages that come with it. In

one instance, he finds himself at a party at Lydia's request, where a woman approaches him and tells him "I've read translations of your books in Germany. You're very popular in Germany." To which he replies: "That's nice,(…) I wish they'd send me some royalties…" (23). That kind of reply shows that despite the admiration people have for him and the compliments he receives, he stays unimpressed by it, and is not comfortable with praise. However, it does also correspond to Chinaski's persona of casual indifference towards success that makes him a symbol of orthodox hegemonic masculinity. He sarcastically refers to that when drunk, saying "I sat there thinking, hey, you're Chinaski, Chinaski the legend. You've got an image. Now you're in the women's dorm. Hundreds of women in this place, hundreds of them" (26). This shows that he is conscious of the image he has built for himself through his writing, and ridicules it at that moment referring to his reputation as a "womanizer." Therefore, as much as Chinaski's persona is built around the social context of hegemonic masculinity, there is also a sense that he does that not only to fit in the times as a man, but also to have a laugh at how serious people are about themselves and the image they try to maintain.

Numerous critics have pointed out that Chinaski is Bukowski's alter-ego, notably, Harrison who states that "in reading his novels, it is particularly easy to identify the protagonist with the author" (160). Therefore, when Chinaski is put in certain situations, Bukowski himself comes to mind, and his views on his reputation as a writer, women, work and life habits can often be identified as those of Chinaski. Bukowski and Chinaski alike, have expressed their disdain of academia and its propension to over-analyze other people's work. In the novel *Ham on Rye* (1982), which details Chinaski's childhood and the beginning of his adulthood, he details his brief attempt at going to college: "What's the easiest fucking thing to take?" I asked him. "Journalism.

Those journalism majors don't do anything." "O.K., I'll be a journalist" (…) These people knew what to do and they wouldn't talk. I felt as if I was in grammar school again, being mutilated by the crowd who knew more than I did" (221-22). His attitude towards school and people gravitating towards literary circles in general shows how little he has in common with those who take reading and writing too seriously for his liking, and therefore, it sets him apart from the norm, as he doesn't even fit in the social circle where he is admired. As far as hegemonic masculinity goes, it puts him in a category of his own, as someone who rises above being categorized, preferring to forge his own path. Notably, he sometimes shows contempt for his readers and audiences, especially when he has to interact with them; at one particular reading, he states "They were like any other audience: they didn't know how to handle some of the good poems, and during others they laughed at the wrong times. (…] 'What's that you're drinking?" "This," I said, "is orange juice mixed with life." "Do you have a girlfriend?" "I'm a virgin." Why did you seek to become a writer? "Next question please" (29-30). It is clear that he does not have a lot of respect for the audience, and from the questions they ask, it appears as if they are more interested in the "character" and reputation of Chinaski, than the poetry itself. Chinaski also states: "I hated readings, but they helped pay the rent and maybe they helped sell the books" (166). The conflict between how he acts and how people think he should be acting illustrates what social hegemony can do, as there is certainly an argument in saying that the way people expect him to act influences the way he actually acts.

As the novel progresses, his attitude on writing and what it represents in his life in terms of masculine identity becomes more defined. Whereas he admits to being scared when he first started, he embraces his role as a writer and reveals that beyond the reputation, life habits, and

fame of the profession, writing is truly what he enjoys doing. Even when he gets into a fight with Lydia at one point, he chooses to write her a letter instead of verbally arguing with her, as it is his preferred way of coming to terms with his feelings. In novels where Chinaski is depicted, he talks about his life and the place that writing occupies in it, in a way that allows him to sort through his emotions. Although he has a sense of humour about it, it is often a medium that allows him to channel his negative thoughts. Oftentimes there is an impression that whatever he is unable to verbalize, he is able to communicate through writing. As a renowned author with a reputation for an hedonistic lifestyle, he is portrayed as someone who mostly keeps to himself while in public, and is able to come to terms with who he is through writing. Therefore, it is not surprising that he would communicate with Lydia this way when things are not good between them, as it would allow him total honesty:

> "I got up and went into the breakfast nook where my typewriter stood on the table. I turned on the light, sat down, and typed Lydia a 4-page letter. Then I went into the bathroom, got a razorblade, came out, sat down and had a good drink. I took the razor blade and sliced the middle finder of my right hand. The blood ran. I signed my name to the letter in blood" (40).

By performing such a violent and masculine gesture, Chinaski enhances the dramatic effect of what he wants to express, making a statement that he is a writer, and that Lydia needs to accept it. Signing his name in blood adds to that message, bringing forth the metaphor that he pours blood sweat and tears into his work, and that it allows him to express who he really is. Lydia reacts to the letter by calling him and saying, "I'm going out DANCING! I'm not going to sit around alone while you drink!"(41) Her response is meant to hurt him, as he had previously

expressed his disdain of dancing, pointing to the fact that while doing so, Lydia was flirting, telling her "suppose that I grabbed a woman on the street like that? Would music make it all right?"(24-25) As stated before, even if he is no longer part of the working-class and is not subjected to its codes, he still retains part of its ethos, and it is still very much a part of who he is. As such, dancing can be seen as somewhat embarrassing, for not only can it be interpreted as "unmanly," but performing badly would subject him to failure, and thus ridicule, which would expose him as vulnerable.

Chinaski's relationships with women, discussed in the previous chapter, is strongly attached to his relationship to writing, as being a famed writer as allowed him to know more women than he ever would have had he had remained an anonymous post-office worker. His success made him more attractive to certain women as he has established himself as a dominant force within the scope of hegemonic masculinity. His writing has allowed him to explore and engage in romantic relationships in a way that never would have been possible without his writing talent. As such, a lot of his correspondences with women is through letters, where they tell him they like his writing, and he invites them over if they wish to fly to Los Angeles. This way of communicating puts more emphasis on his identity as a writer, as it highlights the fact that that is how he seduces his partners. What this means is that he uses his talent for writing, and therefore his mastery of language as a tool of seduction. The women to whom he writes letters are already seduced by his prose, and writing means that he can take the time to think about what he is going to say, and does not have anything to prove right away, as he would have to in social settings that make him uncomfortable.

Furthermore, as Bukowski describes himself as a "dirty old man," something which applies to Chinaski as well, he turns to writing as a tool of seduction in lieu of his physical appearance to do so. He does so with Mindy (p.72), Liza Weston (p.186), and Tanya (p.242), among others. As Bukowski himself never hid his admiration for John Fante (having penned the foreword to the reedition of *Ask the Dust* in 1979), so does Chinaski. His identity as a writer has a lot to do with him being unique and not caring about other authors or the literary crowd, but when asked in an interview who his favourite author is, he states: "Fante." "Who?" "John F-a-n-t-e. *Ask the Dust*. *Wait Until Spring, Bandini*." (…) "Why did you like him?" "Total emotion. A very brave man" (p.200). Therefore, it is not surprising that the two novels share so much in terms their approach and subject matter, especially when it comes to their approach to writing as a central element of the protagonist's masculine identity.

For Arturo Bandini, writing is his way out of poverty, and of showing others that he can accomplish something great, and become someone of note. His self-esteem is low, and as a result, others do not see much in him either. If Chinaski's relationship to writing was that it had made him who he was and gave him a purpose and an identity, Bandini is hoping to accomplish that without having achieved any of it yet. Bandini is not recognized as a writer, but makes it clear that he has a very precise plan in mind as to how to advance his career:

> I was twenty then. What the hell, I used to say, take your time, Bandini. You got ten years to write a book, so take it easy, get out and learn about life, walk the streets. That's your trouble: your ignorance of life. Why, my god, man, do you realize you've never had any experience with a woman? Oh yes I have, oh I've had plenty. Oh no you haven't. You need a woman, you need a bath, you need a good swift kick, you need money ... Afraid of

> a woman! Ha, great writer this! How can he write about women, when he's never had a woman? Oh you lousy fake, you phony, no wonder you can't write! No wonder there wasn't a woman in *The Little Dog Laughed*. No wonder it wasn't a love story, you fool, you dirty little schoolboy.
>
> To write a love story, to learn about life. (18)

Here, the insecurities are not only linked to that of being a man, but also to his potential failure as a writer. The two are closely linked in his mind, and if he cannot perform as a writer, he cannot perform as a man either.

To Bandini, the whole idea of being a writer is idealized and romanticized, and there is a very clear path he has to follow in order to achieve the status he wants. According to him, in order to be a writer, you have to have lived a certain amount of experiences, and he does not feel like he can pretend to be one yet. The parallel between women and writing is also obvious, and by doing so, Bandini also gives himself a way to justify his behaviour towards Camila, as it adds to the "tortured artist" mystique he seems to want to embrace. As the novel progresses, his insecurities about his writing grow to the point where it not only affects his relationship with Camila, but all aspects of his life. He gets insecure towards his neighbours, landlords, anyone who crosses his path, and gets overwhelmed by the smallest of details. Focusing on Fante's previous novel, *Wait Until Spring Bandini* (1938), Rocco Marinaccio explains the dynamics of Italian families, stating that,

> it is typically the children and grandchildren of immigrants, who, in pursuit of an American identity, challenge l'ordine della famiglia, the characteristic ideology of southern Italian immigrants that establishes the family as the primary social unit and

> determines relationship not only between family members but also between family members and outsiders. In Bandini, however, it is Svevo Bandini who violates this code of behaviour, adopting the American values of independent ambition and professional achievement in place of the traditional Italian emphasis on personal sacrifice and family loyalty. Like many immigrant men, Svevo hungers to "make America," but discovers that doing so requires a hard knuckle individualism alien to traditional Italian values. To be an American man risks failing as an Italian man. (44)

There are many aspects here that apply to what the son, Arturo Bandini, is going through at the time when *Ask the Dust* is set. Since both novels are part of the same series with the same protagonist, the events of *Wait Until Spring, Bandini*, continue in the latter novel. What drove his father to leave the family is something that motivates Bandini as well, as he shows a great deal of ambition in regards to what he wants to accomplish as a writer, and the character trait Marinnacio describes as "hard knuckle individualism" fits him perfectly. The tone of the novel and the way the events are narrated all have this characteristic of being self-centred, as if no one else in the world mattered but Bandini. He does not care about hurting Camilla or others, as long as he can take advantage of a situation to make himself look better. The people he has kind words for are those who can make him progress, or those from whom he needs something in order to survive. He is in awe of his editor, J.C. Hackmuth, for instance, and considers himself his "protégé" (31). He is also of good will towards Mrs., Hargraves, his landlady who shows racist tendencies before being convinced of Bandini's charms. When one of his stories is accepted for publication by Hackmuth, who sends him his first royalty check, he attempts to prove to himself and to Mrs. Hargraves that he has suddenly come into wealth, and the following ensues:

> Then I laid an extra five dollars on the desk. “For you, Mrs. Hargraves. Because you’ve been so nice.” She refused it. She pushed it back. “Ridiculous!” she said. But I wouldn’t take it. I walked out and she hurried after me, chased me into the street. “Mr. Bandini, I insist you take this money.” Pooh, a mere five dollars, a trifle. I shook my head. “Mrs. Hargraves I absolutely refuse to take it. (57)

This exchange with Mrs. Hargraves not only shows that he wants her to like him, but also highlights the fact that he wants people to know that he is wealthy. Having previously talked to Mrs. Hargraves about his writing career, he aims to convince her that his wealth is the result of his success as a writer. What he says about not having had experiences with women, and how he treats people according to his own craving for recognition and success shows that he has adopted the American values mentioned by Marinaccio. However, just like his father before him, he does so while coming from an Italian family, with Italian values where family comes first and where a man’s identity is closely tied to the patriarchal control and power he has over the family and its reputation. Consequently, his actions are based on what he thinks is expected of him, and are a performance. His constant negative interpretation of other people’s interactions with him drives him to constantly try to prove himself in an attempt to mask his own insecurities; this happens with Camilla, whom he tries to diminish because of her origins: “Little Mexican princess,” I said. “You’re so charming, so innocent.” She jerked her hand away and her face lost colour. “I’m not a Mexican!” she said. “I’m an American.” I shook my head. “No,” I said. “To me you’ll always be a sweet little peon. A flower girl from old Mexico.” “You dago sonofabitch!” she said. It blinded me, but I went on smiling” (61-62). Here, he calls her out for her origins, trying to prove that he is a “real” American who has a higher status because of that. When she calls him a “Dago,”

however, he is unable to accept it and acts as though everything is fine even if he cannot stand it. In his mind, his success as a writer depends on how he is perceived by the people around him, and Camila makes him realize that however hard he tries to blend in, he cannot conceal his Italian identity. He is so obsessed about being a successful writer that he antagonizes a priest for not knowing about his work and not caring for it:

> I walked to it and pulled out the issue containing *The Little Dog Laughed*. The priest had seated himself. "This is a great magazine," I said. "The greatest of them all." (…) "It's rotten," he said. "Rotten to the core." "I disagree," I said. "I happen to be one of its leading contributors." "You?" the priest asked." And what did you contribute?" I spread *The Little Dog Laughed* before him on the desk. He glanced at it, pushed it aside. "I read that story," he said. "It's a piece of hogwash. And your reference to the Blessed Sacrament was a vile and contemptible lie. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." (…) But I couldn't speak no more. He had plucked out my heart. Hogwash! All those nuances, that superb dialogue, that brilliant lyricism—and he had called it hogwash. Better to close my ears and go away to some far off place where no words were spoken. Hogwash! (73-74)

The parallel between Chinaski and Bandini is interesting, as Bandini clearly states that Fante was an influence, and yet their realities are so different. Had Chinaski been in a situation where he would encounter a priest, he most likely would not have cared to let him know he was a writer, and would have brushed the encounter off as just a small anecdote. To Bandini, however, it is much more impactful, and even though a priest might not come to mind as his target audience, he is angry and sad at its reaction and acts as if the priest should be aware of the great talent that stands before him. He only has one short story to his credit, and yet is adamant that he is a great

writer and should be recognized as such. To Bandini, being recognized as a writer is so important that he gives tremendous importance to what others think of his work, regardless of who they are and what their actual interest in his work means. He takes every criticism with the same passion, and it does not matter whom he encounters, he will make sure to let them know about his writing and about the fact that they are in the presence of his yet-to-be- recognized greatness. As Matthew Elliott points out, "Arturo's apparent reconnection with the margins is the emotional crux of his narrative, and is perhaps all the more compelling for its contrast to the earlier moments when he echoes the discriminatory rhetoric once directed at him" (530). He is in the margins because of his status as an Italian-American, because his lack of funds makes him desperate for success, and because of his dream of becoming a renowned writer.

In *Women*, Chinaski is already a successful writer, but in the two previous novels where he is the protagonist, *Post Office* (1971) and *Factotum* (1975), he is stuck in the same situation as Bandini, a man with nowhere to go, desperate to make it as a writer, who has no interest in the proletarian way of life. Even if Chinaski is successful in the time period explored in *Women*, he is still marginal and does not show an interest in positioning himself against the mythos of the American dream. Bandini, even if he shows a strong desire to not be considered marginal by others, still has a difficult time trying to fit in. If the tone in *Ask the Dust* is hopeful at times and desperate at others, it is always about a man overwhelmed by the world that surrounds him, who does not always understand how he is supposed to act and why. So Chinaski relates to Bandini's struggle and passion, as they both share this love for writing, coupled with a struggle to "fit the mould" imposed by social norms.

Ask The Dust is filled with examples of Bandini daydreaming about his status, or failing to live up to his own expectations, but there are also instances where he consolidates his identity as a writer. Having "The Little Dog Laughed" as proof of his aspirations, he gives it to anyone who gives him the slightest sign of acknowledgement, and more often than not, he is met with rejection or disinterest. This includes the scene with the priest analyzed earlier in this chapter, his neighbour, or the janitor at Camilla's workplace. He imposes the story on them, which drives them to show their lack of interest, deeply affecting Bandini's self-confidence.

There are, however, instances where he receives praise for his work, which might appear uneventful in relation to the negative emotions displayed in the novel, but which nonetheless comforts Bandini in his conviction that he has what it takes to live the American dream, and gives him confidence to move forward and write down new ideas. The first of such instances occurs when he receives a letter from a man named Leonardo. Ecstatic, Bandini calls it "beautiful," and declares that Leonardo is "a great Italian critic only he was not known as a critic, he was just a man in West Virginia, but he was great and he was a critic, and he died" (14). To Bandini, even if this man has no influence on how he is perceived on the literary scene, the fact that he likes "The Little Dog Laughed" means that his appreciation of the story means as much to him as any negative criticism which he might've received in the past. Leonardo understands his genius, and there is no doubt in Bandini's mind that others will soon follow. He goes as far as stating, "He was happy to the end, and one of the last things he did was sit up in bed and write me about *The Little Dog Laughed*: a dream out of life but very important; Leonardo, dead now, a saint in heaven, equal to any apostle of the twelve" (14). He mentions that everybody in the hotel he is staying at had read the story, which suggests the idea that in order to reinforce his identity as a writer,

Bandini makes sure that everybody who is in some way part of his life is familiar with his work. Therefore, Leonardo's letter takes on even more importance in his eyes, as it is one of the only signs of encouragement he receives in a context largely dominated by indifference.

Another example of how much of a difference positive feedback to his work makes in his life, happens when he gets word that a young 14-year-old girl in his hotel has read and liked "The Little Dog Laughed". He recalls the encounter saying "I could tell from her eyes she had read *The Little Dog Laughed*. I could tell instantly. "' You read my story, didn't you?"' I said. '"How did you like it?'"(…) '"I think it's wonderful,"' she said. "'Oh so wonderful! Mrs. Hargraves told me you wrote it. She told me you might give me a copy. "' My heart fluttered in my throat"(53). This compliment is so unexpected that he becomes emotional, rather than accepting it as the supposedly great author he will become. If orthodox hegemonic masculinity marginalizes emotions, Bandini fails to remain in control, and therefore within this specific social context, fails as a man. To show emotion, in this context, may be perceived as weakness. He then invites her in, and is so welcoming that there is a sense of uneasiness about the whole situation, to the point where he mentions, "I could see I frightened her. I tried to be nicer, for I didn't want to scare her away" (53). He lies to her about his age telling her he is "only eighteen" and says, "I'm not a man … I didn't want to be old before her" (53). If he craves recognition as a writer, it is clear from his interactions with Camilla and with other men around him that he also craves recognition as a man, and that the two aspects are closely related. Here, however, he is so overwhelmed by the opportunity to interact and connect with someone who enjoys his writing that he is prepared to give up his "manliness" in order for them to form a bond. It is the only instance in the novel where

he gets to physically interact with someone who enjoys his work, and as a result, he seems to be at a loss as to how to act with her.

If his interactions with Camila make him act in a way that reminds one of the predominance of orthodox masculinity in the social climate of 1930s Los Angeles, Bandini's interaction with that young girl highlights another kind of insecurity, where he does not know how to act in the presence of someone who appreciates him without malice or without anything more to gain from him other than the fact that she appreciates his work. He is so used to people either trying to exploit him or simply being mean to him that he is taken aback by kindness and appreciation, challenging Bandini's understanding of masculinity by leaving him clueless as to how to act in such a situation. As a result, he is overly demonstrative to her, trying to enthusiastically explain his motivations, which the young girl experiences as an uncomfortable sexual tension or even advance, and the manner in which her mother enters the room and brusquely takes the girl away from the scene reveals not only the awkwardness of the scene, but Bandini's inability to ascertain how his own actions might be interpreted by others.

If the two aforementioned situations certainly gave Bandini grounds for self-congratulation and allowed him to keep on believing he could make it as a writer, the moment that makes him truly believe that he has what it takes to be an accomplished author comes when his agent, J.C. Hackmuth, sends him a letter with an enclosed royalty check informing him that one of his stories will be published in a literary magazine. He reacts by saying,

> I was a rich man once more. 175$! Arturo Bandini, author of *The Little Dog Laughed* and *The Long Lost Hills*. I stood before the mirror once more, shaking my fist defiantly. Here I am, folks. Take a look at a great writer! Notice my eyes, folks! The eyes of a great writer.

> Notice my jaw, folks. The jaw of a great writer. Look at those hands folks, the hands that *created The Little Dog Laughed* and *The Long Lost Hills*. I pointed my index finger savagely. And as for you, Camilla Lopez, I want to see you tonight. I want to talk to you, Camilla Lopez. And I warn you, Camilla Lopez, remember that you stand before none other than Arturo Bandini, the writer. Remember that, if you please. (57)

This moment changes how Arturo sees himself, and how he thinks others should view him. He talks about his hands, and the action of shaking his fist and pointing his index finger savagely, which represents a very masculine act. Hands are capable of punching, and from the orthodox masculinity point-of-view, being able to fight and not being afraid of perilous situations is highly valued. As mentioned by Connell, "it is not hard to show that there is some connection between gender and violence. Body-contact sports, such as boxing and football, involve ritualized combat and often physical injury. These sports are almost exclusively practised by men" (213-214). Therefore, Bandini shaking his fist in front of the mirror can be interpreted as a reference to boxing, insinuating that he is not afraid to take risks or get hurt. Furthermore, it is through references to his body that Bandini celebrates his rise in social status – where rough hands once toiled in manual labour, they are transformed here into the delicate tools of the writer. He is now relevant as an author, and everyone should notice. Whereas his story being selected is an intellectual accomplishment, his focus is on his body at that moment reflects orthodox masculinity's valuation of physical prowess more than it does intellectual accomplishments. One hundred seventy-five dollars is not exactly "making it," but as he has struggled for such a long time to have enough money to live decently, it feels like a fortune to him, and once again, it overwhelms him. After that, he throws money away on food, alcohol, overpays his rent as

previously discussed in order to impress his landlady Mrs. Hargraves, and spends more than he should at Camilla's café to impress her. Financial success is a defining aspect of hegemonic masculinity, and by acting in this showy grandeur, he tries to show her that he has a lot of money, and therefore, can be taken seriously as a man. As Connell mentions in her explanation of the concept of transnational business masculinity, the hegemonic model is based on power and control, which means that those who have money are at the top of the masculine hegemony (220). At that moment when his story has been selected and he has just received a royalty check, he is on top of the world, and feels like he could accomplish anything. The way he talks about Camila -- about how she should know how great he is and how blessed she is to be in his presence -- shows that he has convinced himself that he has achieved a great success and can now be considered a true writer. As such, he is now a "made man," a true American, and everyone should notice. In his mind, at that precise moment, he has reached the unreachable, and is at the top of the hegemonic hierarchy of masculinity.

The way in which he interprets the act of writing is an obsessive urge and a gesture of performativity. As far as his masculinity goes, writing is not only part of who he is or who he aims to be, but also something that he uses to produce an image -- that of a man in total control who can earn respect from others because of the unmistakable talent he believes he possesses. Whereas Chinaski drank in order to be able to write without holding himself back, Bandini uses writing as an outlet, not afraid to put any idea he has on paper. He does not produce nearly as much writing as Chinaski does, but every time one of his stories is published, he becomes another person, which also gives him a certain legitimacy in terms of the type of "character" he wants to become. Chinaski views writing as matter-of-fact in his life, something that he did not seem to

think about as grandiose in the time period where *Women* takes place. To Bandini however, writing is a different kind of obsession -- he uses it to put other people down, as he seems to think of it as a weapon. As such, when he states, "I was twenty then. What the hell, I used to say, take your time, Bandini. You got ten years to write a book, so take it easy get out and learn about life, walk the streets. That's your trouble: your ignorance of life. Why, my god, man, do you realize you've never had any experience with a woman?" (18) He has a predetermined idea of what it means to be a writer, and instead of trusting his abilities and writing about the life he knows, his ambitions are based on other people's successes, which means that the writing career he dreams so much about is more about the image he will then project as a man, rather than something that comes to him naturally and that he has to express.

If the act of writing is interpreted as a weapon, the most prominent example is when he has an interaction with the priest who does not think highly of his work. It focuses on his disbelief that someone would not recognize his genius, which once again shows that writing is not as cathartic or necessary to him as it is to someone like Chinaski. What happens immediately after that encounter is of interest, as he states, "The finest short story writer in American Literature, and this person, this priest, had called it hogwash." (74) This shows what the act of writing represents to him, something to make him into a man rather than to show his true emotions. He wants people to consider him as a great writer, rather than writing because he feels like he has to, or because he enjoys doing it. Then, he says,

> As soon as I got to my room I sat down before my typewriter and planned my revenge. An article, a scathing attack upon the stupidity of the Church. I pecked out the title: The

> Catholic Church Is Doomed. I hammered it out furiously, one page after another, until there were six. Then I paused to read it. The stuff was awful, ludicrous. (74)

Not only does he want to use writing as an act of revenge with bad intentions, it also brings him hatred towards himself, as he deems his writing to be of poor quality, and therefore puts him in an even worse state of mind that he already was in after the priest had dismissed his story. Where Chinaski sees writing as a joyful obsession or a form of therapy, for Bandini, the main purpose of writing is the cultivation of a public image of prestige rather than the act of writing itself.

When examining how Bandini interprets his own masculinity and links it to his status as a writer, there is no doubt that although he and Chinaski have very different perspectives, they are both obsessed with writing and what it means to their masculine identity. Analyzing Mordecai Richler's protagonist, Barney Panofsky, however, makes for a different type of man, as writing came late into his life and was construed as a sort of redemption, rather than a reason to live. Barney's motivations are thus different from the two other protagonists; he is already an established businessman with a good reputation, making his relationship to writing one of redemption and peace of mind rather than a compulsive will to live as is the case for Chinaski and Bandini. As Mark Steyn states in his article "Boy Meets Girl in Montreal," "Barney Panofsky is a cheery Philistine in a group of literary talents--make that 'literary talents'" (1). Barney sees writing as an act of contrition and arguably, as a way of making amends for a questionable past. Surrounded by artistic friends and relations, Barney finds his calling as a television producer, where he becomes wealthy and develops a taste for luxury and independence. Being surrounded by successful artists and writers makes him bitter and sarcastic towards anything related to the craft, as the three characters who have had the most success in their respective field, Terry McIver,

Clara Charnovsky, and Blair Hopper, have also had, in Barney's mind, a negative impact on his life. As such, the reason why he feels a sudden urge to write his memoirs, is that he is approaching the end of his life and Terry McIver, a rival successful writer who shared his circle of friends in youth, has written some details about Barney that he feels he has to address.

McIver's claims is that Barney is responsible for the death of his best friend Boogie, who had mysteriously disappeared at Barney's cottage after the two of them had an argument in the 1950s. Barney, however, is convinced that Boogie will reappear someday, and that he has wasted his talent as a writer. He characterizes his relationship with Boogie in the following ways: "The truth is, Boogie was the most cherished friend I ever had. I adored him" (8). ; "I loved Boogie and miss him something awful. I would give up my fortune (say half) to have that enigma, that six-foot-two scarecrow, lope through my door again" (9). This shows how close Barney was to him, and he does not shy away from hinting at what a literary genius he thought Boogie was, a quality that was handicapped only by his laziness. He makes it clear by saying things like "Boogie allowed that in the opening chapter of his discombobulating novel-in-progress (…) Improvising, I'm sure, Boogie went on to say that …" (8). At the end of the novel, Barney's son reveals that he has left a large sum of money to Boogie should he return, so that he could finally publish his book. Having a best friend with this much wasted potential, who met such a tragic end certainly did not veer Barney towards artistic dispositions, but his first marriage is also something to look at when discussing this side of the character. Clara committed suicide at a young age while she was still married to Barney, her reputation has since "soared, and that coffee-table book of her ink drawings started to sell in the thousands … The Clara Charnofsky Foundation, inaugurated as a loving but seemingly futile gesture, started to bank millions" (248).

Barney is often blamed for her death in the same way that he is blamed for Boogie's disappearance. Those two tragic relationships coupled with his aversion for Terry McIver makes Barney an unlikely candidate to write a novel, but as he wants his life to be remembered as he had lived it, writing very much becomes part of who he is as a "real man." Barney holds himself in very high esteem, and even though he has been surrounded by gifted writers his entire life, he has no second thoughts about his ability to write down his story. The way he talks about Terry McIver is an indication of his thoughts that the accomplishment of writing a novel is nothing special, as he constantly downplays his ability as a writer. He introduces him by saying "Poor Terry was no more than tolerated by my bunch, a pride of impecunious, horny young writers awash in rejection slips, yet ostensibly confident that everything was possible" (1). Connell mentions that "within the one school, or workplace, or ethnic group, there will be different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self" (9). In Barney's entourage, there seems not to be a common vision of masculinity. Barney, however, approaches it differently, as he feels the need to mention that he was more liked within the group than Terry, which in his own eyes makes him more influent, and therefore makes him a hegemonic force within the group. He goes on throughout the novel questioning his literary abilities or saying things like "I imagined Terry McIver bleeding profusely in a shark-infested sea, feeling another tug at what's left of his legs just as a rescuing helicopter is attempting to winch him out of the water. Finally, what remains of the lying, self-regarding author of *Of Time and Fevers*, a dripping torso, is raised above the surface, bobbing like bait in the churning waters, sharks lunging at it" (11-12). In this particular sequence, Barney makes the extent of his hatred for McIver very clear, also attacking his credibility as a writer by calling him self-regarding, which implies that Barney

thinks he is full of himself. As Barney never had the talent to establish himself as a writer prior to writing his memoirs, his hatred for Terry is not only directed at who he is as a person, but also at his professional success. By imagining him dying in a shark infested sea, Barney lets his frustration out with the use of prose rather than with physical violence, therefore playing Terry's game, using writing as a performance to ridicule him. He exaggerates masculine physical prowess in order to discredit him as a person, and by ironically mentioning Terry's talent, Barney tries to dominate him using the codes of hegemonic masculinity, as he never was able to do so as a writer.

Martine-Emannuelle Lapointe argues that *Barney's Version* "présente comme le récit de la perte : perte de la mémoire certes, mais aussi perte de la femme aimée, des ambitions passées, des idéaux, de l'enthousiasme. Seul dans une ville qui lui ressemble de moins en moins, Barney résiste passivement en attendant la fin » (186). In other words, as Barney gets older, he loses his masculinity, which was the anchor of his identity throughout his life, as age and illness render him passive. Barney's desire to take on writing near the end of his life, then, can be interpreted as a last attempt at affirming his masculinity and his superiority over Terry and the others in his circle, but also reinstate his identity as a "decent" human being. As he feels himself losing touch with reality as a man who has always been able to be in control (except for his relationships with women), writing is a way to stay in touch with who he is, and dictate how he wants to be remembered and how things "really" happened. The control he seems to have displayed in his life shows that he was aligned with what hegemonic masculinity represented in these years, and now that he realizes he is slowly aging into fragility, writing helps him retain some of his sharpness and deal with the encroaching effects of Alzheimer's disease.

Anderson argues that orthodox masculinity is characterized by the act of putting others down to make oneself look better notably by "the marginalizing of others, and homophobia" (261). Barney displays that exact behaviour on multiple occasions, either with Terry McIver as stated above, or with other characters that he felt were standing in his way. Such is the case with Miriam's husband, Dr. Blair Hopper, whom Barney despises to the extent of sending him fake faxes, or questioning his sexuality by sending him the following missive: "We acknowledge your return of our 1995 TOY BOYS calendar, but cannot send you a refund due to the many stains and the fact that the August and September pages are stuck together"(14). Subsequently, Blair suffers from a heart attack, after which Barney acts as though he feels sorry of him, while he is in fact delighted. Anderson mentions that orthodox masculinity is "a highly segregated, homophobic, sexist, and misogynistic gender regime"(26), and therefore, by associating Blair with homosexuality, Barney discredits him within the regime of heteronormative masculinity, where to be gay signalled to be weak or a "lesser" man. He thus attempts to place himself above Blair in the masculinist social pecking order, since in Barney's mind, weakness is associated with femininity, passivity, and homosexuality – all of which fit the hetero-normative discourses of gender.

There is, however, a sense of irony in the fact that Barney uses homophobic slurs to discredit Blair, as he becomes more and more passive about his own failures as time goes by. Blair has accomplished a lot in his life, and now has what Barney desires the most -- a relationship with Miriam. As Barney's own failures become more obvious, so is his tendency to discredit anyone who has had success in life without benefiting Barney himself. From, Blair, to Terry, to Clara, anything that they did is diminished by Barney in order to make himself look better. Being

unable to come to terms with his own failures drive him to discredit anyone else's success, as in his mind, he is a "real" man, and as such, nobody who does not fit within the code of orthodox hegemonic masculinity should be able to do better than him in life.

In terms of the writing process, since the novel is presented as Barney's memoirs, it implies the fact that what is said is what he chooses to share with the reader, from his perspective, which means that not only does he try to portray himself in a favourable light, but it also is the last thing he can hold on to in order to establish his dominance as a man. While one can sense that Barney was not liked by everyone through his own recollection of events, writing still gives him the ability to tell these events how he remembers them and therefore, instances where he might have been seen as mean or rude can be explained from his perspective. However, as much as writing allows Barney to reclaim his masculinity by showcasing him in full control of situations, it also shows him at his most vulnerable. This is clear from the very beginning, as he has trouble remembering the word "colander," for instance, saying, "I held the spaghetti thingamajig in my liver-spotted hand, wrinkled as a lizard's back, but I still couldn't put a name to it" (14). This occurs on other occasions throughout the novel, but is confirmed to have been Alzheimer's disease by his son Michael, whom Barney had left in charge of the manuscript. He states, "Following the setting of his affairs, my father's decline was precipitous. From an increasingly frequent inability to find the right words for the most commonplace objects, or remember the names of those near and dear to him, he might waken unaware of where and who he was" (410). With Alzheimer' disease causing Barney's loss of autonomy, we see a man once in full control of his life transforming him into someone who does not remember who he is and who needs constant care from others in order not to hurt himself. While this coda to Barney's life is transmitted through

his son, Barney himself did not let his masculinity fail him completely, but the ending serves as a reminder of the vulnerability of men, independently of the image they want to project or of the social context in which they evolve.

If, *Women* and *Ask the Dust* present somewhat hopeful possibilities of the protagonist's growth in terms of a modified relation to their own masculinity, *Barney's Version* ends with the worst possible outcome: its protagonist's death. Therefore, as much Barney's toxic masculinity softens at the end of his life, he does not show signs of an evolving mind or a better understanding of his own faults. He softens because he is sick, whereas Chinaski and Bandini do so because they have a sense of hope that better things are to come. Barney on the other hand, keeps the same mindset until his mind and body fail him, showing contempt for others and blaming them until the end.

In all three novels discussed here, the protagonists have in common the sense that writing gave them a reason to move forward, to express themselves, or to set things straight. They all have aspirations as writers, and they identify writing as a tool to communicate their emotions, and as a way to give themselves social credibility and let their voices be heard. To Chinaski, writing represents freedom to say what he has to say, to drink, go to the racetrack, meet beautiful women, and stay away from the grueling work expected from the working-class. It is what allowed him to get out of a lifestyle he despised, and everything he has been able to accomplish in life comes from writing. For Bandini, writing also represents something he aspires to, but something that is yet to come – an idealized vision of the American Dream, as he wishes for everything he could get out of life to materialize through his writing. His Italian-American identity makes it hard for him to assimilate and be seen by others as a true American, and therefore, he believes that by

being recognized as a great author, he will also be recognized as a true American. Finally, for Barney, writing is a tool that allows him to affirm his superiority over others. He narrates things from his own limited and masculinist perspective, which allows him to represent himself as the good guy beyond reproach. In essence, all three protagonists use writing as a way of consolidating their masculinity.

The next chapter will demonstrate the ways in which each of these three protagonists indulge in vices that both affirm and enact, through their repetitions, their masculine identities as performative aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter 3

Vices: Indulging as a Performance of Hegemonic Masculinity

In the novels analyzed in this paper, the three protagonists suffer from addictions that could be interpreted as vices. Defined by Merriam-Webster as "moral depravity or corruption," I argue that what constitutes a vice is defined by the social norms in place at a certain time and as such, it is appropriate to refer to them as "so-called vices." Some of the "so-called vices" displayed in the novels are purely subjective and defined by the historical times in which the novels take place, while others have more in common with addiction. For instance, Chinaski and Barney both display behaviours that suggests alcoholism, and all three protagonists show tendencies towards mental and physical violence. As such, using Cara *Fabre's Challenging Addiction in Canadian Literature and Classrooms* (2016) as an anchor to understand the meaning of addiction in relation to literature, this chapter will look at how so-called vices and addiction impact the protagonist's lives in relation to their masculinity, and demonstrate the link between the two, arguing that "so-called vices" are part of the performance of hegemonic masculinity. How men are perceived and perceive themselves when indulging in these so-called vices is linked to the hard-edged image or persona that was the norm for a certain type of hegemonic masculinity at the time the stories take place.

In Bukowski's *Women*, Chinaski's so-called vices are part of his appeal as a writer, and have become a part of what his readers expect of him as a public figure. He drinks, fights, gambles, enjoys violent sports such as boxing, engages in sex with multiple partners throughout the novel, and even conceives of the act of writing as a type of vice – an addictive compulsion he cannot

control and which he has to engage in in order to maintain his sanity. The novel begins with him reminiscing about how he was when he was trying to write his first novel, he "drank more than ever (…) I drank a pint of whiskey and two six packs of beer each night while writing" (7). Right from the start, Chinaski lets us know that his alcohol consumption is closely related to his writing, a recurring theme as the story progresses. As a result, Chinaski is able to construct a masculine image of himself that relies on the idea of the misunderstood character who cannot escape his "vices" in order to get his feelings down on paper. Cara Fabre states that Bela Szabados and Kenneth G. Probert, in their work *Writing Addiction* (2004), "base their analysis of writing as a form of addiction" (7). For Fabre, addiction represents a problem, as they claim that "its metaphorical and extended uses are best understood by way of comparing a variety of cases in light of the master-slave relationship." (26) She continues,

> The stated intent, implicit assumptions, and ultimate implications of such comparisons risk producing an aesthetically depoliticized view of addiction, while simultaneously reproducing a profoundly political, hegemonic portrayal of addiction—distilling its meaning down to a constellation of symptoms, burying its mystic cause inside the individual addict-artist, and tacitly accepting its inevitable (re)occurrence. (7)

What she is describing, however, is precisely how Chinaski is perceived by his reader in *Women* -- an addict-artist who projects an aura of perpetually having a "couldn't care less attitude," which gives him that masculinist reputation as someone living his life how he wants to without regard for social conventions or even his own well-being. However, this is where a dichotomy presents itself: on one hand, his persona suggests someone who does not care about social norms and does whatever he feels like doing, and on the other, as someone who is expected to act a certain way

in accordance with his "vices" in order to fit in a certain mould shaped by the boundaries of orthodox masculinity. The "cursed-poet" image that Chinaski has cultivated is brought up on page 89, an example already discussed in the previous chapter, where the crowd who attends one of his readings question the fact that he is not drinking. This highlights the close relationship between his writing and his life habits, which are true of both Chinaski and Bukowski himself, who gained that reputation through his alter ego. Reading Neeli Cherkovski's biography *Bukowski, A Life* (2020), confirms that this character, even if he shared a lot with its author, perhaps made him a larger-than-life figure who instantiated the idea of hegemonic masculinity more than Bukowski himself. He states that "the hard-drinking bard is mostly fictional" (Cherkovski 10). If Anderson speaks of orthodox masculinity as a toxic ideology that viewed homosexuality as something reprehensible and unmanly, Cherkovski goes on to state that:

> When I think of the essence of Charles Bukowski, I think of the day he met my partner Jesse Cabrera when we visited him at his house. There was no tough-guy surprise that I was gay. Hank took me aside and said, "I'm so glad you are with somebody, man." (…) None of this surprised me—Hank accepted people. (10)

As much as the character of Chinaski embodies some aspects of the prevailing form of hegemonic masculinity in the 1970s, I argue that he shares a lot of these traits with its author, as he is known to be his alter ego rather than a purely fictional character. As much as drinking is a part of the character and the vices in which he indulges are part of the writing and the persona, he also was "a disciplined writer with an understanding of what it takes" (10). As much as he enjoys drinking, attending horse races and boxing matches, and the company of women, Chinaski's focus and

identity (as much his masculine identity as his social identity) remains as a writer, with everything else coming as a consequence of that, whether positive or negative.

Fabre's statement regarding a possibly depoliticized view of addiction, as much as it fits Chinaski's persona, is a consequence of how the reader interprets the character, more than what the character (and the author) himself wishes to project to his audience. Multiple times in *Women*, Chinaski is offered alcohol by his admirers, without asking for it. Arriving in Kansas City for a reading, for instance, Frenchy, a man responsible for him while he is there contributes states, "'Welcome to Kansas Shitty, Chinaski, " as he is handed a bottle of tequila: "I took a good gulp and followed him into the parking lot" (25). Shortly afterwards, Chinaski says that Frenchy was a "liquor salesman. The back seat of his car was packed with cases of beer. "Have a beer," he said, "and get me one too.'" (26) These excerpts show not only that his admirers thought of him as someone who would never refuse a drink, but also that when they are with him, they try to act a certain way that would put them in his good graces, with a couldn't-care-less attitude that is not always sincere. However, it is what is expected of him, and he does so regardless of if he wants to or not, much like the scene mentioned in the previous chapter, where he drinks at a reading because the audience demands it even if he originally had decided not to.

There are instances in the novel where Chinaski's masculinity is associated with his drinking, which in turn, represents an inability to be sexually available for the woman he is with, exposing a dichotomy in his own masculinity. When Lydia gives him a phone call, the following ensues:

> "What are you doing?" she asked. "Just sitting around." "You're sitting around and drinking and listening to symphony music and playing with that goddamned

> Coleman lantern!" "Yes." "Are you coming back?" "No." "All right, drink! Drink and get sick! You know that stuff almost killed you once. Do you remember the hospital?" "I'll never forget it." "All right drink, DRINK! KILL YOURSELF! SEE IF I GIVE A SHIT!" (40)

This scene illustrates Chinaski's habits from Lydia's perspective, which is far different from the glorification that his readers and admirers seem to nurture towards his alcoholism and lifestyle. She is able to guess exactly what he is doing, and feels powerless to the point of telling him that she does not care if his habit kills him. This indicates that Lydia feels like she is not important to him, that anything that she says or does will not change Chinaski's decisions about how to go on with his life. Therefore, he is unable to satisfy her, which could be interpreted as his failure in terms of his sexuality and his masculinity, since, from a hegemonic perspective, a man is supposed to be able to effortlessly satisfy a woman. The idea of virile masculinity dictates that Chinaski should be able to satisfy Lydia, who is portrayed as childlike by the way she reacts to the situation, and the dichotomy lies in the fact that even though the situation seems to bother him, it is not due to the fact that he cannot satisfy Lydia, but rather because the fight with her is an "inconvenience." In another scene, with Joanna Dover, the following happens: "I hope you'll let me stay for four or five days." "It will depend on your performance," she said. "That's fair enough." By the time we finished the wine I could barely make it to bed. I was asleep by the time Joanna came out of the bathroom…"' (128).

Once again, this is an example of Chinaski failing to meet his lover's expectations, as a direct result of his vice of alcohol abuse. She directly mentions the idea of a "performance," and therefore confirms the social stigma associated to men when it comes to sexual virility. Once

again, however, Chinaski describes the scene as an anecdote, and does not seem distracted or troubled by the fact that he was too drunk to make love. This begs the following question: Is the man who is unable to satisfy a woman still hegemonic in his carelessness and undisturbed behaviour? Looking at how hard-edged habits are perceived within the scope of orthodox masculinity, it is not far-fetched to claim that not being bothered about how he is seen by the women in his life, and choosing to indulge in what he likes despite what they may think of him as a consequence, makes Chinaski even more of a "free man" in line with the discourses of hegemonic masculinity. As someone who does not care what his partners think of him and his sexual performance, his carelessness makes him feel totally independent, and makes his "vices" even more important to his identity as a man.

However, this does change when he meets Sara, for whom he expresses a desire to change those habits so as not to lose her. According to Annie Potts in her essay "The Essence of the Hard On: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Cultural Construction of Erectile Dysfunction," "Failure from the penis to become erect signifies the downfall of this phallic economy as it dictates the sexual identities of both men and women. It denotes the deficiency of the man—his failure robustly to represent the phallus" (87). Taking this into account, even if Chinaski does not seem bothered by the consequences of his alcoholism on his relationships, his failure to please the woman he is with at a particular moment directly confronts him to his own (failed) masculinity, and therefore, his identity as a man. The fact that he does not react when it happens with Joanna suggests that he is either too drunk for the situation to bother him, or that his position within the hegemonic discourse is coincidental, and that he does not care for it. The events of the next

morning, however, suggest otherwise. As soon as he wakes up, he has sex with her, and is embarrassed by his "performance":

> My cock began to rise. I put her hand on my cock. I grabbed her hair, pulling her head back, kissing her, savagely. I played with her cunt. I teased her clit for a long time. She was very wet. (…) Finally I was unable to hold it back any longer. I was wet with sweat and my heart beat so loudly that I could hear it. "'I'm not in very good shape," I told her. "I liked it. Let's have a joint." (128)

In contrast with Chinaski's usual nonchalance towards what happens around him and the situations he finds himself in, there is a sense of shame in this particular scene, that is a result of his life habits such as excessive drinking and cigarette smoking. Right after the two of them are done with sex, Joanna offers him a joint, once again associating the sexual act with "vices," and allowing Joanna not to dwell on Chinaski's apparent insecurities linked to his sexual performance. By smoking a joint, the sex is quickly forgotten, and both of them can move on without having an uncomfortable conversation about the events that just took place and everything that such a conversation might reveal about Chinaski's masculinity as well as the nature of their relationship. If as Potts suggests, "In the more powerful, traditional patriarchal discourses—those that dictate common-sense notions of "normal" and "abnormal" human sexual response—such as medicine and sexology, the erect penis signifies 'healthy' male sexuality" (89), then that scene represents Chinaski's failure as a hegemonic man. In this context, the joint, which is only one example of many times when Chinaski uses mind-altering substances to escape the world he is confronted to, represents the unwillingness to confront the reality of hegemonic masculinity, which Joanna understands as difficult to live with, thus offering the joint. Without necessarily acting as a mere

substitute for the phallic signifier, the joint here helps the transition between a moment of shame which they both want to avoid, and the next morning.

When it comes to "vices," Chinaski obviously has a preference for alcohol, but indulges in other activities that could be interpreted as such, one of which is gambling. He does so in a very unique setting, which is at the horse racetrack. Once again this creates a tense situation with Lydia, who accuses him of being lazy; she says "'You're the most unknown famous man I've ever met." "I'm just not ambitious." "You are but you're lazy. You want it for nothing. When do you write anyhow? When do you do it? You're always in bed or drunk or at the racetrack."' (73). By telling him that, she questions Chinaski's motivations at their core, accusing him of pursuing fame, and of not seeing writing as a priority, which is something he emphasizes in the novel. Furthermore, he makes it clear multiple times that he is not comfortable with the idea of fame, even telling her in the same conversation, "I don't like people" (74). Even when gambling at the racetrack, alcohol seems to be a big part of his daily routine, as with Bukowski himself. Cherkovsky says that "Hank concentrated on the racetrack, his writing, and drinking" (106). He also says that "The racetrack provided much of the color and atmosphere of his poems" (111). As a result, it appears clear that for the alter-ego Chinaski, these things are also tied together.

As mentioned earlier, Chinaski dislikes public readings, and mentions that he does them for the money if for nothing else. When Tammie, one of his lovers, confronts him and says '"You're afraid of the audience, aren't you?"' he replies by saying, '"Yes but it's not stagefright. It's that I'm there as the geek. They like to watch me eat my shit. But it pays the light bill and takes me to the racetrack. I don't have any excuses about why I do it"' (146). He doesn't look for excuses, and admits that he does so for the money, and to fund his love for horseracing. As far as

masculine identity goes, this goes back to the hegemonic expectations his audience has of him, and how it makes him feel like he is a prisoner of his own image, which he has created through his writing. He admits that he does not like being seen as a caricature of himself, which as much as it corresponds to the norm of hegemonic masculinity, forces him to stay in character rather than acting authentically at that particular moment.

A good example of the influence of his status as a writer and how it makes him feel comes as he is with a woman named Debra, he has the courage to kiss her, and things turn sexual. At this moment, he realizes what is happening and says "I was finally getting everything the boys in high school had gotten, the rich pretty well-dressed golden boys with their new automobiles, and me with my sloppy old clothes and broken down bicycle" (210).

As they keep drinking and have sex in the moments that ensue, this sentence serves as a reminder of Chinaski's background, as prior to becoming a known writer, he could only observe other men's successes, leaving him out of the hegemonic elite, and its "privileges." It also illustrates how hegemony works, as Chinaski finds himself in the company of a beautiful woman as a successful older man, while he never could dream of seducing her in his younger years. He is conscious of that dynamic, and therefore, drinking helps him get out of his introvert habits and allows him to lose some of his inhibitions, that are caused by years of feeling like an outsider to the orthodox masculine hegemony. He keeps on drinking, and says, "I had never been a dresser. My shirts were all faded and shrunken, 5 or 6 years old, threadbare. My pants the same. I hated department stores, I hated the clerks, they acted so superior, they seemed to know the secret of life, they had a confidence I didn't possess" (210). He admits that he never was a confident man, and it reinforces the idea that perhaps his "vices" serve as a way for him to cope with the world,

and that the "tough guy" hegemonic image he gets out of it coupled with his writing is more of a consequence of his lack of self-esteem than a way to act like a "man" as some of his readers like to believe.

Chinaski's "vices", as much as they are part of who he is and fit the hegemonic narrative of the time period, are not willingly performed as hegemonic affirmation, but rather as a way to cope with the world around him, which he has trouble fitting in, by his own admission. As Russell Harrison says, "Bukowski is the only major post-War American writer who has denied the efficacy of the American Dream' (13), and it appears like the "cursed poet" label that Chinaski's readers seem to stick to the character is part of the American dream concept that Bukowski himself criticized so much.

As a man, Chinaski gives an aura of disinterest with a could-not-care-less attitude that makes him perform a kind of masculinity that is definitely hegemonic. However, his discourse here suggests otherwise. Whereas not taking care of himself and not caring about clothing could be interpreted as hegemonic because it fits with his character and personality, it may also echo the opposite; by admitting his dislike of clerks and the fact that he thinks they possess a confidence he does not have, he places himself below them in terms of social status. This could be interpreted as Chinaski "unmaking" himself as a man, or self-sabotaging because he does not think of himself as being worthy of his status. As for the message sent by possessing expensive goods, it is part not only of hegemonic masculinity, but also of the American Dream, where hard work can lead a man to a life where he can afford anything he wants. As Harrison has pointed out, Bukowski rejected that idea, something that also applies to Chinaski. Bandini however, chases the American dream, and his idea of how to perform his masculinity is in contradistinction to Chinaski's. To

him, showing his wealth and parading in expensive clothes seem to be a way to fit in and prove his worth, until he actually does it and realizes that in fact, it makes him feel like an impostor.

As a result, when his story "The Long Lost Hills" gets picked up by a literary magazine and he receives a royalty check for it, he loses touch with reality and goes from struggling to pay his rent and eat, to throwing money away for things he does not need. After he insists his landlady, Mrs. Hargraves, accept a five-dollar tip (the action takes place in the 1930s and the check amount is 175$), he proclaims:

> A pittance as far as Arturo Bandini, author of numerous stories for J.C. Hackmuth, was concerned. (…) It was the finest suit of clothes I ever bought, a brown pinstripe with two pair of pants. (…) I bought two-tone brown and white shoes, a lot of shirts, and a lot of socks, and a hat. (…) The clerk wrapped my old clothes in a box. I didn't want them I told him to call up the Salvation Army, to give them away, and to deliver the other purchases to my hotel. On the way out I bought a pair of sunglasses. I spent the rest of the afternoon buying things, killing time. I bought cigarets, candy, and candied fruit. I bought two reams of expensive paper, rubber band, paper clips, note pads, a small filing cabinet, and a gadget for punching holes in paper. I also bought a cheap watch, a bed lamp, a comb, toothbrushes, tooth paste, hair lotion, shaving cream, skin lotion, and a first aid kit. I stopped at a tie shop and bought ties, a new belt, a watch chain, handkerchiefs, bathrobe and bedroom slippers. Evening came and I couldn't carry any more. (58)

This long excerpt shows a man who is overwhelmed with the thought of having money to spend, and who loses touch with his basic needs. Suddenly, he feels like he has become somebody else,

a new, successful version of Bandini. The fact that he can now afford expensive purchases is proof of his manhood, and to him, having two of his stories published means that he is now an established author, and everybody should know about it. As previously mentioned, being a writer is very much part of who he is or tries to be as a man, but how he reacts to moderate success and disposable income shows that perhaps, his idea of success is closely tied to his image, something that sets him apart from the likes of Chinaski, for whom the hegemonic presence he possessed was more of a consequence of his writing than something he sought to achieve with his work. When Chinaski says he hates store clerks and does not possess the type of self-confidence they do, he accepts it as part of who he is and does not appear to dwell upon it. Appearances, however, are everything to Bandini, and his relationship with money seems to be tied to Matthew Elliott's point about whiteness and ethnic identity (2010). Arturo is so desperate to be recognized as a white American man that he will take abuse from his landlady, Mrs. Hargraves, over the slightest detail, even when she argues that his hometown of Boulder is not in Colorado, but in Nebraska. Elliott argues that "reluctantly, and under threat of expulsion, Arturo also participates actively in this symbolic refiguring of his identity (…) a symbolic erasure of his past for which he is rewarded finally with a room in the Alta Loma. In fact, for his willingness to make these changes and adopt her (misinformed) worldview (533).

Whereas Chinaski is seen by others as an American, despite having been born in Germany, Bandini has to fight the perception that he is "the ethnic other," and as a result, money represents acceptance and the realization of the "American Dream". One might argue that clothes and new shoes are perhaps not superfluous purchases, but the fact that he spends money until he can't carry his purchases anymore, shows an identity-related insecurity that is confirmed immediately

afterwards when he says that "the image in the mirror seemed only vaguely familiar. (…) All at once everything began to irritate me. (…) what had happened to the old Bandini, author of *The Little Dog Laughed*? Could this hog-tied, strangling buffoon be the creator of The Long Lost Hills? I pulled everything off, washed the smell out of my hair, and climbed into my old clothes" (59). As soon as he comes down from his money-induced illusions of grandeur, he realizes that he does not recognize the man he sees in the mirror, and is not comfortable pretending to be someone he is not. In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," Butler states that:

> gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time - an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (519)

What Bandini does, when going on a shopping spree and spending money on luxurious clothes and other various things he does not really need, is linked to his gender performance, as he tries to give the impression that he is what he considers a "real man." Well dressed, well-groomed, with money to spend, casually smoking cigarettes. As far as what it meant to "be a man" in the 1930s in the United States, Bandini seems to have a clear idea of the image he wants to imitate, perform, and project, but once he comes down from his spending frenzy and regains a sense of who he is, it does not feel right to him, and he feels like an imposter. Therefore, when he acts like the "abiding gendered self," (Butler, 519), it is because he feels social pressure to do so, a kind of

obligation brought forward by the social climate of the time. No one explicitly tells him to buy new clothes, lotions, or cigarettes, but he still feels the impulse to do so before realizing how bad it makes him feel. He eventually dons his old clothes after realising that "all at once everything began to irritate me. The stiff collar was strangling me. The shoes pinched my feet. The pants smelled like a clothing store basement and were too tight to the crotch" (59).

For Barney Panofsky, the idea of "vices" spans a wide range of things, including alcohol, cigar smoking, sports (as both fan and spectator), cheating on his wife, and more. When it comes to his drinking, not only does it serve as an assertion of his masculinity, it also enables him to socialize with other men of "higher status," which is part of the concept of homosociality.[1] When drunk, he acts in ways that he would not normally dare to, in order to assert his dominance over others, such as Blair Hopper. In one particular scene, he calls Miriam in the middle of the night and Blair picks up the phone. When debating if he should go ahead with the call, he says:

> The trouble is, Blair would probably be the one to answer the phone, and I had already blotted my copybook with that pretentious bastard the last time I called. " I would like to speak to my wife," I said. "She is no longer your wife, Barney, and you are obviously inebriated." He would say, "inebriated." "Of course I'm drunk. It's four o' clock in the morning. (13)

Here, Barney makes fun of Blair's vocabulary, and replies that, of course, he is "drunk," as it reasserts how much more of a man he is compared to Blair, doing "manly" things such as drinking.

[1] Homosociality constitutes a mechanism and social dynamic that explains the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. A popular use of the concept is found in studies on male friendship, male bonding, and fraternity orders. It is also frequently applied to explain how men, through their friendships and intimate collaborations with other men, maintain and defend the gender order and patriarchy. See Hammarén and Johansson (2014).

By making fun of the vocabulary he uses, he places himself above Blair in the hierarchy of masculinities, which illustrates Connell's point that "different masculinities exist in definite relations with each other, often relations of hierarchy and exclusions" (216). Therefore, by asserting that it is pretentious, Barney insinuates that Blair's choice of word is less masculine, which is one of the characteristics of orthodox masculinity. By using a more colloquial language, Barney does not try to appear superior to his fellow man, and speaks as a "real man" should by his own standards. By admitting that he is drunk, Barney takes another shot at Blair, implying that it is normal to be drunk at such an hour, something that Blair does not have a habit of doing. Barney then proceeds to try and humiliate him: "I found some stunning nude photographs of her when she was with me, and I was wondering if you would like to have them, if only to know what she looked like in her prime" (13). Again by saying that, he diminishes Blair by implying that Miriam looked better when she was with him, which in his mind is something that makes him better than Blair, who will never experience Miriam at the age Barney did. Furthermore, this is part and parcel of the link between homosociality and heterosexual relations, competition, and enactments. Michael Flood explains, "Status is not measured only by whether one achieves intercourse, but organized in terms of wider hierarchies of sexual practices and the social codings of sexed bodies" (346). In this context, having had sex with Miriam at a younger age certainly makes Barney believe that he is more of a man than Blair, but it also speaks to how Barney treats women in general throughout the novel, more as commodities for his own status and benefit than as equals.

He then proceeds to write a letter to him, pretending that he has ordered a gay-oriented calendar, further asserting his own masculinity over Blair's. Even if he does so at multiple

moments in the novel, he lets it go completely here, as alcohol eliminates any restraints he could have about saying such things to Blair directly. Later on, when visiting one of his children in London and sleeping in the guest bedroom that Miriam and Blair had used before, he says, "I searched the mattress for tell-tale stains. Nothing, Har, har, har. Professor Limp Prick couldn't cut the mustard"(18). This particular sequence goes back to Annie Potts's point that "the penis stands in for and up for a man" (85), and that "power, authority, and control over desire are predicated on whether or not one has the phallus" (86). Therefore, by implying that Blair is impotent, Barney takes away his masculinity, and it is understood that as opposed to Blair, Barney could make love to Miriam at any given moment. It is not a coincidence, then, that Blair is introduced when Barney is drunk, as it immediately creates a stark contrast between the two characters. Barney appears as a hard-drinking man who does whatever he wants and is not afraid to disturb other people in order to create a reaction, whereas Blair is presented as a snob who is asleep rather than drinking, and who uses a certain vocabulary that, while appearing distinguished, makes him less of a "real man" by Barney's standards. The hierarchy between the two is established right away, and Blair is presented as a coward who "stole" Barney's wife, and therefore, his claim to happiness in his later days. The fact that Barney thinks he cannot have sex with Miriam only reinforces that, as it not only implies that Barney could do it, but also that he could make Miriam happier than Blair ever could. Barney often uses Blair as a target for his own insecure masculinity, and it also suggests that it is a way for him to justify the fact that he thinks he is still a better man for Miriam despite his infidelity. Once again, he dismisses Blair's masculinity, saying, "With insight, I guess I shouldn't have uncorked a second bottle, and a bottle of Chateauneuf to go with Miriam's osso buco, and then the cognac. Refusing the cognac, Blair

primly covered the proffered sifter with his hand. "Aw, come on," I said. "I hope I'm not failing a test of my masculinity," he said" (324). As Barney tries to get him to drink more and then has a laugh at his expense for not accepting the cognac, Blair catches him off guard by bringing attention to masculinity and alcohol drinking explicitly, therefore ridiculing the concept that one would be more of a man if he drank than if he did not. Barney once again implies that what he drinks is of the highest quality – enjoying the trappings of luxury which allows him to place himself within the masculine space of exclusivity in relation to "lesser" men. Once Blair addresses Barney's obvious intentions in terms of proving his masculinity in relation to his own, he proceeds to ridicule him on his political views and his beliefs and life choices, since Blair has taken drinking out of the "competition" between them:

> Then inevitably, he launched into his daily Vietnam sermon, excoriating Nixon, Kissinger, and Westmoreland. In no mood to acknowledge that I had no time for that bunch either, I said, "Sure it's a dirty war, but Blair, don't you feel just a wee bit guilty, a man of conscience like you, allowing this war to be fought largely by blacks and rednecks and working-class kids out of the inner cities while your middle-class ass is safe in Canada? (324-325)

This excerpt shows Barney's disdain for Blair in a very direct way, as even if he admits that he agrees with him regarding American politics, he feels like he has to find a way to make him feel bad and antagonize him. By implying that his desertion to Canada means that he has no compassion for those who were forced to go to Vietnam, Barney once again question Blair's masculinity, by making a link between Blair's political defection and those who lost their lives in combat. He agrees with him politically, but is too proud to admit it, which is certainly something

that has to do with Barney's inebriated state, but can also be linked to the fact that Barney feels that his masculinity is threatened by Blair. Barney did not fight in Vietnam, but the fact that he is Canadian and that the country was not involved in the conflict makes it look like he could not have gone to combat even if he had wanted to. As Miriam's husband, Blair is now despised by Barney, but before the events leading to his divorce with Miriam, Barney already saw Blair as a threat, as he was knowledgeable on subjects that Miriam was passionate about, and had talents that Barney did not possess. In that same vein, Barney says that "His last night with us, "Uncle" Blair built my enchanted kids a bonfire, and I sat on the porch fulminating, nursing a Rémy Martin and pulling on a Montecristo" (325). In that moment, one can feel that Barney's "vices" are becoming a problem, as he prefers enjoying the empty trappings of success -- drinking quality brandy and smoking the very best cigar -- rather than help Blair with the bonfire. He is unhappy that Blair has a bond with his children, and the idea of hegemonic masculinity takes an interesting turn, for if Barney's "vices" are a reminder of his status and "manliness" to other men around him in social situations, it does not have such an impact while he is at his cottage with his family. Therefore, it appears that in this instance, Barney acts this way out of spite, something that is confirmed when he says that he was "fulminating" while doing so. Essentially, he feels incompetent next to Blair, who earlier in the day had fixed Barney's tractor in his absence, much to his disdain. In the scene where he uncorks two bottles of wine and offers Blair a cognac, he does so sarcastically to show Blair his appreciation for what he did, and when Miriam asks why he got all those expensive bottles out, he says, "The redemption of my tractor. Blair, I don't know how we ever got on without you" (324). That admission is full of sarcasm and spite, and Barney's attitude towards him that evening clearly shows that he feels threatened by his presence. The fact

that he is drinking and smoking alone on the porch shows that by refusing to engage in things that appear trivial or "unmanly" to him, he finds himself alone, left to perform his resentful masculinity to himself.

If Chinaski drinks excessively, smokes, and enjoys the racetrack, there is a sense that he does not care what he drinks or smokes, as long as he can have any of those things. For Barney, however, there is an emphasis on the kind of alcohol he drinks, the kind of cigars he smokes, and the fact that he attends hockey games, something that is not available to just any man. Instead of just stating that he drinks whiskey and smokes cigars, he says things such as "And now, into my third Laphroaig" (24), or "pulling on a Montecristo Number Two, a bottle of Macallan by my side" (26). The three brands mentioned here are expensive ones, which not only gives Barney credentials in terms of his cosmopolitan and worldly tastes, but relates to Anderson's notion of orthodox masculinity, where bullying, drinking, smoking, and other "manly" behaviours are encouraged. It also relates to Connell's point that the objectionable things that some men do— rape, assault, environmental degradation, dog-eat-dog business practices, etc.— can be lain at the feet of hegemonic masculinity (22): "the hegemonic form of masculinity in the current world gender order is the masculinity associated with those who control its dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets, and the political executives who interact (and in many contexts merge) with them." (51) She calls this model transnational business masculinity, and the behaviours exhibited by Barney in the novel suggests that he enacts both Anderson and Connell's conceptions of hegemonic and transnational business masculinity. As much as he drinks and smokes, he makes great efforts to set himself apart from just any drinker or smoker, by

specifically consuming products of the highest quality and desirability among other men, and making it a point to let others know what he drinks or smokes.

The fact that Barney is surrounded by artists who succeeded and accomplished their dreams while he was only able to achieve a modest level of success makes him extremely cynical, which not only explains his aversion toward some of his friends, but also his need to constantly remind himself and the people around him of his financial success and of his masculinity. Even when it comes to his best friend, Boogie, he goes on about how "Boogie, that most perspicacious of men, couldn't handle liquor, it made him sloppy, so he didn't grasp that we were being patronized" (29). This clearly shows Barney's tendency to put himself above others by pointing out that other men could not tolerate alcohol as much as he did, and that he could handle any situation. Fabre points out that "addiction is tied to poverty, racism, colonialism, patriarchy and other forces of power and oppression" (14). In Barney's case, patriarchy and power seem to be the dominant features explaining his alcoholism and his smoking habits, vices that allow him to both denigrate his male rivals and hide the truths of his own gender and personal failures.

Barney thus associate masculinity with competition amongst men, as we saw with Blair previously and as we see, also, with his long-time friendship with Hymie Mintzbaum: "I espied Hymie Mintzbaum at another table with a bimbo young enough to be his granddaughter" (24). The fact that Hymie is in the company of a much younger woman who is said to have prominent physical attributes is surely a display of financial wealth and power in the tradition of orthodox masculinity, but it is also emphasized by Barney's denigration of women generally; he calls Hymie's companion a "bimbo" and implies that she is with the much older man simply because of his financial wealth. Whereas Chinaski's relationships are based on his reputation as a writer,

there often is an intellectual exchange taking place between him and the younger women he is with. Hymie, however, bases these relationships purely on his wealth, which clearly shows the dynamic of transnational business masculinity (Connell), where rich men enjoy the company of younger women because they are rich.

Later, Barney realizes that he might have to fight Hymie in order to prove and maintain his own tenuous masculinity:

> Obviously Hymie, who was pushing forty at the time, felt threatened by the young. Clearly my manhood, if not Boogie's, was in question, as I had never been bloodied in combat. Neither was I old enough to have suffered sufficiently through the Great Depression. I hadn't cavorted in Paris in the good old days, immediately after its liberation, knocking back martinis with Papa Hemingway at the Ritz. I hadn't seen Joe Louis floor Max Schmeling in the first round and couldn't understand what that meant to a yid coming of age in the Bronx. (29)

Barney readily admits that his manhood is in question and that he has no experience in such a situation, which means that within the boundaries of orthodox masculinity, he would not be able to defend himself as he would like to, and laments the fact that he had a life devoid of any the traumatic experiences that shape and harden "true" men, which from his point of view, takes away from his legitimacy as a man in control of any situation, and therefore, at the top of the proverbial hegemonic pyramid. By having witnessed some of the world's most devastating events, he believes he would understand what it means to be a tough man, and therefore better prepared to fight and look in control while doing it. According to Anderson, some of the traits of orthodox masculinity include "risk-taking, self-sacrifice, a willingness to inflict bodily damage, and the

acceptance of pain and injury" (261). It appears clear that in this particular instance, Barney is subject to that form of hegemonic masculinity, and fears not being able to live up to such a standard. Stating that Hymie felt threatened by the young points out to another aspect of hegemonic masculinity, which is, in the words of Connell, that "gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do" (27). As Hymie gets older, Barney implies, in his assessment of his friend, that older men cannot keep up with younger ones, which in a situation where physical violence is a threat, means that a younger body is more agile, and therefore more likely to assess its superiority in a situation where physical dominance is needed. When he states that Hymie is afraid of the younger generation, there is a part of that fear that is rooted in performance anxiety which defines a certain category of hegemonic masculinity.

When Barney drinks whiskey while smoking a cigar and praising some of the Montreal Canadiens' players, he highlights the dichotomy that exists in hegemonic masculinity's discourse mentioned in chapter 1. He reveres elite athletes who act nothing like he does, and yet, his drinking, fighting, and smoking are part of what helps to define him as a man within the context of orthodox masculinity.

If Hymie Mintzbaum once represented a picture-perfect image of how hegemonic masculinity can influence someone's behaviour and appeal, Barney runs into him at the end of his life, a shadow of his former self. If he influenced Barney in his choices when it came to expressing his own masculinity and the choices he made in that regard, he is now unable to make any choices on his own, and his vulnerability terrifies Barney. He states, "I would not have recognized Hymie had not a waiter led me to the table in the Hillcrest dining room where he sat, dozing, in his motorized wheelchair. (…) The linebacker's body had diminished to a near-empty sack of

projecting bones" (231). Then, as the waiter brings Hymie bottled water rather than whiskey while making fun of him for protesting, Barney replies "Don't talk to him like that," I said, "and bring him a Springbank, please" (231). Learning that his granddaughter, who takes care of him, does not want him to drink or eat meat because of his incontinence, Barney cannot insist he have a brisket and wine, sustenance for "real men." By doing so, he gives Hymie a sense of control over his life, but also disregards Hymie's granddaughter's caregiving. Addressing men coming of age in the 1950s and 1960s, Thompson and Langendoerfer argue that "men's identities were negotiated and defined based on their ability to uphold the expectations associated with manhood, earn other men's respect, and distinguish [themselves] … from all women" (121). At the end of his life, Hymie is unable to do any of those things, and by giving him a taste of some of the "vices" he used to enjoy in his younger days, Barney brings back a sense of control and manhood in his life. As Thompson and Barnes Langendoerfer put it, "even though vulnerability is not weakness per se, the guidance of traditional masculinity discourses equates vulnerability with weakness and brands both as unmasculine. Recent studies provide abundant evidence of how older men frame their ill health, aging bodies, or experience of widowerhood in terms of a ''no sissy stuff'' discourse" (123).

In a sense, what happened to Hymie is also what happens to Barney later on, as he is unmanned by Alzheimer's disease. His son Michael declares, "following the settling of his affairs, my father's decline was precipitous. From an increasingly frequent inability to find the right word for the most commonplace objects, or to remember the names of those near and dear to him, he might waken unaware of where or who he was" (410). Just as with Hymie, Barney's masculine identity, so strongly tied in his own mind to power, money, drinking, smoking, and other "vices,"

is reduced to being taken care of by others without being able to defend his sense of pride. As such, Barney's actions as Hymie is rendered a shadow of his former self is of importance, for it shows a kind of masculine "care," but also allowed him to remember what it was like to be in control within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, something that Barney does not get towards the end of his life.

Looking back at the three novels, it is clear that all three protagonists indulged in "vices" that they felt helped them cement their identities as what the social context of their time considered to be "real men." Chinaski was able to do so by drinking, smoking, and gambling while giving the impression that he was totally free to do what he wanted when he wanted, without regards for what others thought of him. As it certainly helped maintain the hegemonic image of the character he had built for his audience, he sometimes felt trapped in that character, and the hegemonic context rendered it difficult for him to express who he really was. As for Bandini, while his association with "vices" in the context of hegemonic masculinity is not as clear as in the case of Chinaski or of Barney; he certainly exhibits despair to fit in, highlighted by his relationship to money, possessions, and writing as ways to prove to others how much of a man he really is. The way he views such things can certainly be interpreted as "vices," as they elate him and make him lose touch with reality in hopes of attaining a certain status linked to hegemonic masculinity. Barney, on the other hand, clearly associates drinking, money, power, fighting and smoking to the idea of being a man, as he says so himself or is called out by other characters on that subject. His love for expensive cigars and whiskey, and his complete refusal to acknowledge how someone can be a man if he acts any different than him shows that, most notably his contempt and disgust for Blair. However, as different as the protagonists are in their understanding of vices and how

indulge in them, there is a common trait between them in the fact that their "vices," whatever they may be, are vehicles for the public and private performances of masculinity, and shows an unwavering desire to fit in the ethos of orthodox hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

There are multiple ways to express masculinity, and one is not confined to a set definition of masculinity nor to how that masculinity is performed. As Connell puts it, "It is clear from the new social research as a whole that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. We need to speak of 'Masculinities,' not masculinity. Different cultures, and different periods of history, construct gender differently" (*The Men and the Boys*, 9). While this is certainly true and self-evident in the contemporary moment, the same cannot be said about most of the 20th century, where the social codes around gender were much more fixed and codified. When it comes to analyzing masculinity through the lens of Henry Chinaski, for example, one must conclude that orthodox hegemonic masculinity was the social norm with which men of that time had to abide to. Taking a look at how Chinaski acted with women, it is clear that as casual or unforced as he wants his interactions to appear, they are influenced by the social expectations that came with the idea of hegemonic masculinity. He is aware of the fact that the main reason why women of all ages and social classes are attracted to him has to do with his status as a successful writer, which gave him a special status in the hegemonic social hierarchy. From his relationships with Lydia and Sara, to his numerous casual encounters, the interest they have in him is rooted in his reputation at first, even if in Lydia and Sara's cases, it evolves to genuine affection, meaning that perhaps, they took a stronger interest in who Chinaski really was, rather than taking interest in him just because he was a famous writer.

Connell argues that the hegemonic form of masculinity might not be the one that is best suited for the majority of men and that perhaps, it maintains standards that are only reachable for

a small minority of men. This strict codification of masculinity arguably will make the majority of men insecure in terms of living up to such expectations. Chinaski makes it clear that he has felt insecure and inadequate for the majority of his life before he was able to make a name for himself in the literary world. He mentions being aware that a man his age should not attract women who are in their 20s, and this clearly shows that his relationships are influenced by the social context created by hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the way he presents himself to women, as someone who does not care what they think of him, and his insistence that he live life on his own terms, is also a product of hegemonic masculinity, echoing Anderson's argument that it maintains a socio-negative attitude towards women, with sexist and misogynistic underpinnings. While his relationship with Sara is less influenced by the negative impact of hegemonic masculinity, the rest of them are laced with consequences from the orthodox hegemonic masculinity ethos – in other words -- violent language, disinterest, lack of respect, and selfishness.

As for the idea of writing as a performance, which Chinaski identifies with his masculinity, it is clear that the whole idea of Chinaski as the man who seduces women and does whatever he wants is based on his talent as a writer. Without writing, none of the other elements of his life would be possible in the way he lives them in *Women*. Being a famous writer allows him to be in line with the social expectations of hegemonic masculinity, while being free to spend his days however he sees fit. As hegemonic masculinity as a lot to do with prestige, money, and social status, it puts even more emphasis on Chinaski's success, as he is able, like Russell Harrison points out, to question the idea of the American dream and remain marginal, while still maintaining that hegemonic presence. As much of a larger-than-life character as Chinaski is, he takes on such a role with humour, as he knows that the public expects him to act a certain way.

He built a reputation as a hard man with a liking for women, drinking, smoking, and gambling, but as he says, the one thing he truly needs, is writing. He sometimes feels trapped in this character he has created, but even then, writing is his way to express that feeling and to stay sane in a world that he often feels alienated by. It is part of who he is, and it helps him accept his masculinity while making him fit the hegemonic model. Some critics, such as Kyle R Samuelson, argue that this position made him lose touch with who he really was, while in fact, he was always that: a writer that needed the time and space to express his thoughts in order to discover who he really was as a man.

Furthermore, Chinaski certainly was not holding back on vices such as drinking, smoking, or gambling. Taking into consideration that Chinaski is Bukowski's literary alter ego, and that *Women* is filled with moments where Chinaski indulges in "vices," it is safe to say that Chinaski's writing, and therefore his identity as a writer is closely tied to these "vices" and what they represent in terms of orthodox hegemonic masculinity as a gender performance. By drinking, smoking, gambling, and performing other kinds of "manly" behaviour, Chinaski not only performs what is expected of him as a hard-knocks man living by his own rules, but he also acts in a way that makes it easier for him to live his life in the spotlight without it bothering him too much. As Neely Cherkovsky argues, his hard-edged persona did not mean he was a close-minded person, something that, in the 1970s might have been the case for a portion of his readership.

For Arturo Bandini, the idea of hegemonic masculinity has a different kind of influence on his life than it has for Chinaski, as it ties up with Connell's point that it is actually an unreachable ideal for most men confronted to its realities. If Chinaski corresponds to the criteria established for a certain type of hegemonic masculinity, Bandini is desperately trying to do just

that. The way in which it influences his life serves the purpose of acceptance from others as the end goal, whereas Chinaski has already achieved that and the hegemonic status is more of a consequence of his way of life and literary fame than something he wants to accomplish. He does mention Fante as his biggest influence, but the way they approach their relationship with women is drastically different, due to their different approach to hegemonic masculinity. To Bandini, the woman he loves is an unreachable end goal, and he cannot imagine the two of them successfully seducing each other. Because of that state of mind, he acts in ways that drive her away from him, and then regrets his actions and words. This shows in his racist slurs towards her and in his refusal of letting the two of them get close after he had made it clear that it was his biggest wish. He talks about how beautiful and unattainable Camila is, and then sabotages their relationship. The way he reacts when Camila defends herself from his attacks are another indication of the influence hegemonic masculinity has on him. He insults her and when she fights back, he is devastated, which shows that he does not expect a woman to dare fight him back. His constant need to put himself above Camila and to prove to her that he is a great author that she should feel lucky to be in the presence of, shows the influence of the social climate of orthodox hegemonic masculinity on him.

To Bandini, the idea of becoming a celebrated and respected writer is his way out of poverty, and of feeling out of place and misunderstood by people around him. He has yet to leave a mark in the literary world, and he is obsessed with the thought of being recognized as a great talent. Bandini sees it as something that will bring him everything that he thinks is missing from his life: money, fame, respect, status, and admiration from women. Furthermore, as pointed out by Rocco Marinaccio, Melissa Ryan, and Elizabeth Bracey, Bandini's Italian origins in the

context of the 1930s represents another challenge for him, as some of the people he interacts with throughout the novel show contempt towards him because he does not "look" American. Writing is therefore a way for him to define his American identity, as success means he would then become part of the American literary landscape. He sees the act of writing as a way to earn respect and therefore, as a way to be seen as a man worthy of being considered part of the hegemonic elite of the time. For these reasons, it is clear that the act of writing is directly linked to his masculine identity, and whether or not it fits with his personality, he performs his gender in a way that he feels is what is expected to be seen as a "real" man, and to ultimately be successful and accepted.

If Chinaski and Barney's "vices" are clearly determined within the scope of orthodox hegemonic masculinity and what is considered to be "manly" habits, Bandini's are more subdued. There are some instances where he drinks or smokes, but at no time in the novel does he refer to those acts as something that he really enjoys doing or that he feels he must perform in order to be considered a man. However, the way he reacts when one of his stories is chosen for publication and accompanied by a substantial sum of money in comparison to the earnings he is used to, can certainly make his relationship to money be considered a "vice," and it has a lot to do with how he sees himself as a man, whether in a positive light or not. He starts spending an unreasonable amount on things he does not need, and which he later comes to regret, feeling uncomfortable in his "new clothes" and with his new possessions. If, as Butler suggests, gender is the repeated stylization of the body, this also extends to its outward appearance, the way someone dresses and carries himself or herself. When Bandini realizes that this performance he is trying to enact is not who he really is, he panics and slips back into his old clothes, with a feeling of having been an imposter for a short period of time. Therefore, the idea of having money and being recognized as

a writer made Bandini lose touch with who he really was, which confirms that this "vice", in Bandini's mind, is associated with his idea of what it means to be a respected man, and in order to achieve that status, he felt like he had to act a certain way and show others that he was living in luxury and that he could afford to spend the kind of money "real" men spend on their appearance.

For Barney Panofsky, the influence of women within the context of orthodox hegemonic masculinity is obvious. From the way his memoirs are divided into three chapters, each bearing the name of one of his wives, to his views of women in general that could be interpreted as misogynistic, Barney's sense of his own masculinity and role are embedded in the orthodox masculinity ethos exposed by Eric Anderson. He pokes fun at strong-willed women, and the very idea of feminism itself, and is unable to imagine that a woman could be better than him at anything. It is obvious by the way he talks about his first wife, Clara, who, despite being posthumously revered by the masses as a great artist, never gets any recognition from Barney himself. He does not show any more respect for his second wife, whom he refers to as "The Second Mrs. Panofsky" throughout the novel, without ever revealing her name. Even Miriam, whom he really loves and admits that she is more than capable of holding her own, is always described within the scope of his personal success or failures, and through his moments of arrogance or resentment. Once they divorced, she was able to go back to work like she had always wanted, but prior to that, Barney would not let her. Barney's relationships, particularly with The 2nd Mrs. Panofsky, is a good example his orthodox hegemonic views, since he marries her for social status rather than because they are truly in love. Furthermore, the details about his friendship with Hymie, and how Barney describes the women his friend is with, leaves no doubt

that both Barney and Hymie's views on women are impacted by hegemonic masculinity, and what being a man means to them.

When it comes to the act of writing, Barney's case is different from Chinaski or Bandini, as it does not define who he is as a man the same way it does for the two aforementioned protagonists. As somewhat of a failed writer with no education as opposed to his group of friends, Barney found other ways to perform his masculinity, turning his attention on wealth and status instead of art. Writing, to him comes up at the end of his life as it is a way to exact revenge on the people that he feels have done him wrong over the course of his life. In his younger years, Barney was surrounded by talented up-and-coming writers in his group of close friends, and by writing his memoirs just before he dies, he has found a way to prove to himself and to others that they are not above him in terms of literary talent. Writing, to him, is the ultimate way to settle any old grudges he might have had with others throughout the course of his life, and to leave a legacy where he absolves himself of any faults he might have committed, and of any wrongdoings others accused him of. He addresses that at the beginning of the novel, stating "I'm starting on this shambles that is the true story of my wasted life (…) as a riposte to the scurrilous charges Terry McIver has made in his autobiography: about me, my three wives, a.k.a. Barney Panofsky's troika, the nature of my friendship with Boogie, and, of course, the scandal I will carry to my grave like a humpback." (1) Writing also serves as a way to keep himself relevant, as he knows his life is coming to an end, and wants to be remembered on his own terms, rather than by what others have to say about him. As a successful businessman who has made a name for himself in the television industry, he had never considered himself an artist, and his feud with Terry McIver, shows jealousy and contempt on his part.

When it comes to "vices," Barney indulged in many habits that fall in line with orthodox hegemonic masculinity; from drinking, to cigar smoking, to the enjoyment of violent physical sports such as hockey and boxing, he embodies the image of a "man's man." Whereas Chinaski described his "vices" as merely a part of his life among other things, Barney talks about them with a sense of pride, drinking expensive scotches and wines, and smoking premium Cuban cigars. His "vices" are as much a way to perform his masculine persona, as to showcase his financial wealth. It also serves as a way to put down other men in his immediate environment, by making them feel like he is more of a man than they are because of his habits. The way he treats Blair, for instance, is a clear example of how his "vices" make him feel, and it leaves no doubt that orthodox masculinity shapes his actions and his life choices. Connell argued that alcohol and nicotine's marketing were a great example of the idea of collective masculinity, as it appealed to a large portion of men, giving them an easy way to express their masculinity. She states that "The mass marketing of nicotine and alcohol provides striking examples of the collective dimension of masculinity. This is seen both in the boardroom masculinity of the corporate executives who direct these toxic operations, and in the cultural imagery of he-man masculinity which is often used to sell the products (185). Barney's habits and opinions on those who do not follow these kinds of habits show that he gives great importance to what they do for his image as a man, and how he sees other men in relation to their drinking and smoking habits.

In the three novels studied in this thesis, there is no doubt that the characters' masculinity, whether they are conscious of it or not, is a major factor in their daily lives. Whether they express it with their interactions with other men or with women, with their writing, with their habits or "vices," or with other, more subtle characteristics, they are all conscious of the social expectations

and pressure that comes with the idea of being a man, and of being the right kind of man. If Connell talked about a world where multiple masculinities are in play, it is clear that to these characters, even if some are more open-minded than others, the only way to be successful and respected as a man is within the scope of orthodox hegemonic masculinity. It most often is more insidious than Eric Anderson's definition of orthodox masculinity, but the end result remains that in order to be respected as men, these characters feel like they have to follow a certain set of rules established by the social climate of their respective time. Each of the novels analyzed here shows multiple examples where the characters perform their gender without being conscious of the fact that they are following the strict codes of orthodox masculinity. From Chinaski acting like he does not care and drinking at readings because his audience expects it, to Bandini buying clothes he is not comfortable in to project a better image of himself to others, and Barney drinking expensive scotches while ridiculing those who do not like to drink, one cannot deny that hegemonic masculinity has influenced the way these characters have lived their lives.

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